



MD FHFH Report to DNR for 2014-2015

This report reflects the work of FHFH in Maryland for the period of July 2014 through June 2015. General program results are provided along with a description of how each condition outlined in the Scope of Work was addressed.

General Program Results

- Total # of deer donated and processed: 3,387
- Total # of meals provided to food banks and feeding programs: over 650,000
- Total # of participating butchers: 42

Deer Donation Numbers

FHFH was able to receive and pay for the processing of 3,387. While down from the 2013-2014 season this total still represents a successful deer donation season given the reported decrease in the overall deer harvest for MD.

Comments on Fulfillment of Grant Purposes

1. Maintaining a statewide network of venison processors that provide deer processing services at a reduced cost:

Forty-two meat processors spanning nineteen counties participated in the program during the 2014-2015 season. Hunters in the vast majority of the state can reach a participating processor either in their county or a neighboring county in less than 30 minutes. Most processors charge a reduced rate to FHFH. The average discount across the state is 15-20% off their normal processing fee.

2. Recruiting additional deer processors in locations where access is limited:

Additional custom deer processors were sought by way of the Internet, the MD FHFH Volunteer network, and through the help of the MD Department of Natural Resources. Despite approaching several places, FHFH was unable to add any new processors as drop-off points for the 2014-2015 season. No processors meeting the inspection and insurance requirements—or willing to undergo the needed inspection required by FHFH policy and by the Department of Health and Mental Hygiene (DHMH)—were found in the remaining counties of Dorchester, Howard, or Prince George's Counties. As noted above, most hunters in Maryland are now within a 30 minute drive of an FHFH

participating processor. Efforts to recruit additional processors will continue for the upcoming 2015-2016 season.

3. Partnering with County Government Deer Management Programs and other State Organizations:

FHFH currently receives deer donated through a Howard County Parks sharpshooting program. In this case financial assistance from the county helps to offset the processing cost of the deer. This past season FHFH completed the sixth year of the “Doe Harvest Challenge”, a program partnering with the MD Farm Bureau, the MD Grain Producers Association, and the Maryland Soybean Board that provided incentive for increased doe harvest/donation across the entire state of MD. The program provided incentive for hunters to harvest and donate does through a statewide contest held throughout the hunting season. A total of 940 does were entered into the Doe Harvest Challenge. 63 prizes (60 regular zone and 3 grand prizes) were awarded through random drawing across three established regions of the state. For the 2015-2016 season the doe harvest challenge incentive program will again be statewide enabling does to be entered into the contest from any county. All FHFH participating butchers should be available to serve as locations where does may be entered into the Doe Harvest Challenge. Additionally, this year’s Doe Harvest Challenge will again feature a “Junior Hunt Days” component allowing young hunters in the state to donate does during the November 14th and 15th Junior Days for a special separate drawing.

4. Ensuring that venison is processed in a sanitary manner:

All meat processing facilities participating with FHFH are inspected for cleanliness, proper equipment and proper meat handling procedures by local, State or USDA officials. FHFH provides log sheets to each processor for recording deer donor information. The field tags for each donated deer remain with the packaged meat that is picked up by the food banks and local feeding programs. All custom game processors working with FHFH (those who handle only deer—no domestic meats) are inspected by the Office of Food Protection (DHMH).

5. Coordinating the distribution of processed venison to local food banks:

A list of the agencies that received and distributed venison from FHFH processors is included with a quarterly report submitted to the DNR. FHFH supplies meat to the Maryland Food Bank system based in Baltimore including branches in Hagerstown and Salisbury. Meat is also supplied to regional food banks and smaller feeding programs and churches in the local areas around each butcher shop. Many of the FHFH processors provide meat to agencies in their county along with those in neighboring counties. If more custom deer processors are added the amount of meat distributed in counties without processors will increase.

6. Ensuring timely and accurate payment of processing fees:

The per-deer price that FHFH pays each processor is established individually with each processor. Processors submit invoices to the FHFH office which are paid promptly within several business days.

7. Maintaining a database of total venison donations:

FHFH maintains a database of all donated deer including those that were processed at no charge. This database is updated annually and includes entries for each year FHFH has been in operation in Maryland from 1997 through the present. A list of the number of deer donated and processed by each location per county during the 2014-2015 hunting season was included with quarterly reports submitted to the DNR.

8. Maintaining a database of total venison distributed to the various food banks:

FHFH requires log sheets to be completed by each agency picking up donated venison from the participating butchers. These include the agency name, date, amount of meat picked up, and name and signature of the agency representative. FHFH maintains a listing of the agencies in each county that have been approved to receive venison from the participating butchers. To be approved an agency must be a non-profit organization that serves the hungry and must submit a request to receive venison in writing on their organizational stationary.

9. Reporting all pertinent information to the DNR:

An updated list of participating processors was provided at the beginning and end of the year. Changes to the processor list are reported so that updates can be made to the processor listing provided on the DNR website. Any issues that arise regarding the donation and processing of deer through FHFH and the relationship between the DNR and FHFH are shared with the designated contact person and with the Director of the Wildlife and Heritage Service. A report including deer donation numbers, processor information, and other program details is submitted quarterly to the DNR.

10. Providing educational materials that explain the venison donation program to processors and food banks:

FHFH provides informational brochures and brochure inserts specific to the MD FHFH program. Also, a Deer Meat Information Sheet was developed and distributed to all butchers, food banks and other feeding agencies that provide nutrition and preparation information for venison, along with information about FHFH. Hunters who provided their mailing address on the Deer Donation Logs at the butcher shops may receive our program newsletter and other update mailings.

Comments on the Future Outlook for FHFH

The outlook for FHFH in Maryland continues to be positive. Currently about 4% of the deer harvested by hunters in the state are donated to FHFH. Thanks to a variety of supporters

including 2015 grants through the Department of Natural Resources, the Maryland Grain Producers Association, and the Maryland Soybean Board deer will be accepted for donation for as long as funding allows into the fall season. What an opportunity for the hunting and outdoors community to help feed the over 700,000 Marylanders that struggle with hunger each week! The continued promotion of the Doe Harvest Challenge based support from the MD Grain Producers Association, the MD Soybean Board, and the MD Farm Bureau should lead to a continuing increase in doe harvest and donation. New processors are being sought in needed areas of the state such Howard, Prince George's, and Dorchester. In the coming year FHFH will continue to communicate with new and existing contacts to encourage them to begin or renew their financial partnership with FHFH. A continued effort to find and recruit coordinators within each county is occurring. From this growing network of Local Program Coordinators, FHFH hopes to increase both in fundraising efforts as well as our impact within the community as far as meat collection and distribution.