

## **Governor Hogan's Team Offers Relief to Farmers Suffering Crop Damage**

Preventing bear and deer damage to crops was the topic at a recent meeting between Farm Bureau members and DNR officials. At the direction of Governor Larry Hogan, DNR staff have been meeting regularly with Farm Bureau's Wildlife Management Committee to hammer out more efficient control options.

At October's meeting – the second hosted by MFB this fall – DNR unveiled draft plans for a Bear Crop Depredation Permit, night control options under the Deer Depredation Permit, a streamlined Cooperators Permit for farmers and DNR Managed Hunt opportunities for maximum deer herd reduction.

The Bear Permit is available this fall for farmers who work with the regional DNR office. The other programs will be finalized and rolled out before the end of the year. DNR staff will answer questions at Monday's breakout session during Farm Bureau's convention on December 4 in Ocean City.

Governor Hogan pledged to work with us on better wildlife control options in January while meeting with our Board in his State House offices. He reiterated his promise during a summer visit with the MFB Board and County Presidents. Farm Bureau leaders are pleased with the attention paid to the number one complaint of members around the state – the unreasonable loss of crops to under-managed deer, bear and other wildlife populations.

The October meeting included farmers from the lower Eastern Shore with concerns about Sika deer and mid-shore farmers battling whitetail deer. Garrett and Allegany producers discussed bear problems and deer challenges, particularly on farms surrounded by state owned land. Frederick and Carroll farmers outlined the steps they are already taking, which maximize current control methods allowed by the state, but are just not providing enough relief. Anne Arundel and Prince George's farmers expressed frustration over trying to manage deer in heavily populated areas and the need for cooperation and flexibility by DNR police.

As the new deer and bear control options are rolled out next year, Farm Bureau will weigh in on behalf of our members. We will share the draft plans through the GRB and on our website as they are unveiled. Please contact Colby Ferguson at Farm Bureau for more information. He can be reached at [cferguson@mdfarmbureau.com](mailto:cferguson@mdfarmbureau.com) or 1-800-248-9012. In the meantime, here are a few links to existing DNR resources that may be helpful as you explore management options:

- Where to donate venison: [https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/1/d/1TMxrR-fzdrdY165-R6GG7xtp\\_H2ftzEkKJtWIUFK728/pubhtml](https://docs.google.com/spreadsheets/u/1/d/1TMxrR-fzdrdY165-R6GG7xtp_H2ftzEkKJtWIUFK728/pubhtml)
- Maryland Cooperative Wildlife Management Areas: <http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Pages/publiclands/allbyregion.aspx>
- Checking deer into the DNR mobile app: <http://dnr.maryland.gov/Pages/dnrapp.aspx>

- DNR can bring dogs out to the field to chase bear damaging crops in Western MD Counties. Contact Harry Spiker, Black Bear Project Leader, 301-334-4255.
- Deer Management Permit General  
Conditions: <http://dnr.maryland.gov/wildlife/Documents/DMPGeneralConditions.pdf>
- 2017 Maryland Hunting and Trapping Guide:  
<http://www.eregulations.com/maryland/hunting/>