

**18. How do I report problems or violations to the Game Commission or to enroll my farm in Game Commission landowner programs?**

**Telephone Numbers and Counties:**

**814-643-1831**

Adams, Bedford, Blair, Cumberland, Franklin, Fulton, Huntingdon, Juniata, Mifflin, Perry, Snyder, York

**610-926-3136**

Berks, Bucks, Chester, Dauphin, Delaware, Lancaster, Lebanon, Lehigh, Montgomery, Northampton, Philadelphia, Schuylkill

**570-398-4744**

Cameron, Centre, Clearfield, Clinton, Elk, Lycoming, McKean, Potter, Tioga, Union

**814-432-3188**

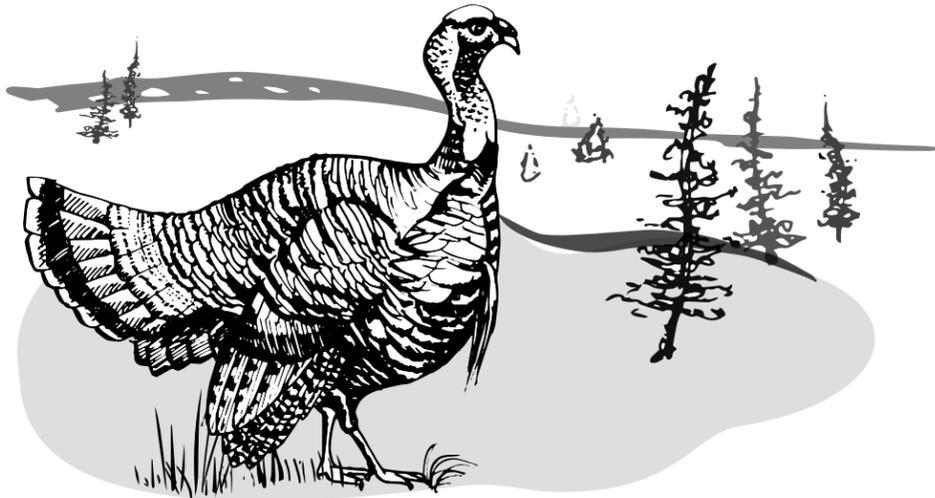
Butler, Clarion, Crawford, Erie, Forest, Jefferson, Lawrence, Mercer, Venango, Warren

**724-238-9523**

Allegheny, Armstrong, Beaver, Cambria, Fayette, Greene, Indiana, Somerset, Washington, Westmoreland

**570-675-1143**

Bradford, Carbon, Columbia, Lackawanna, Luzerne, Monroe, Montour, Northumberland, Pike, Sullivan, Susquehanna, Wayne, Wyoming

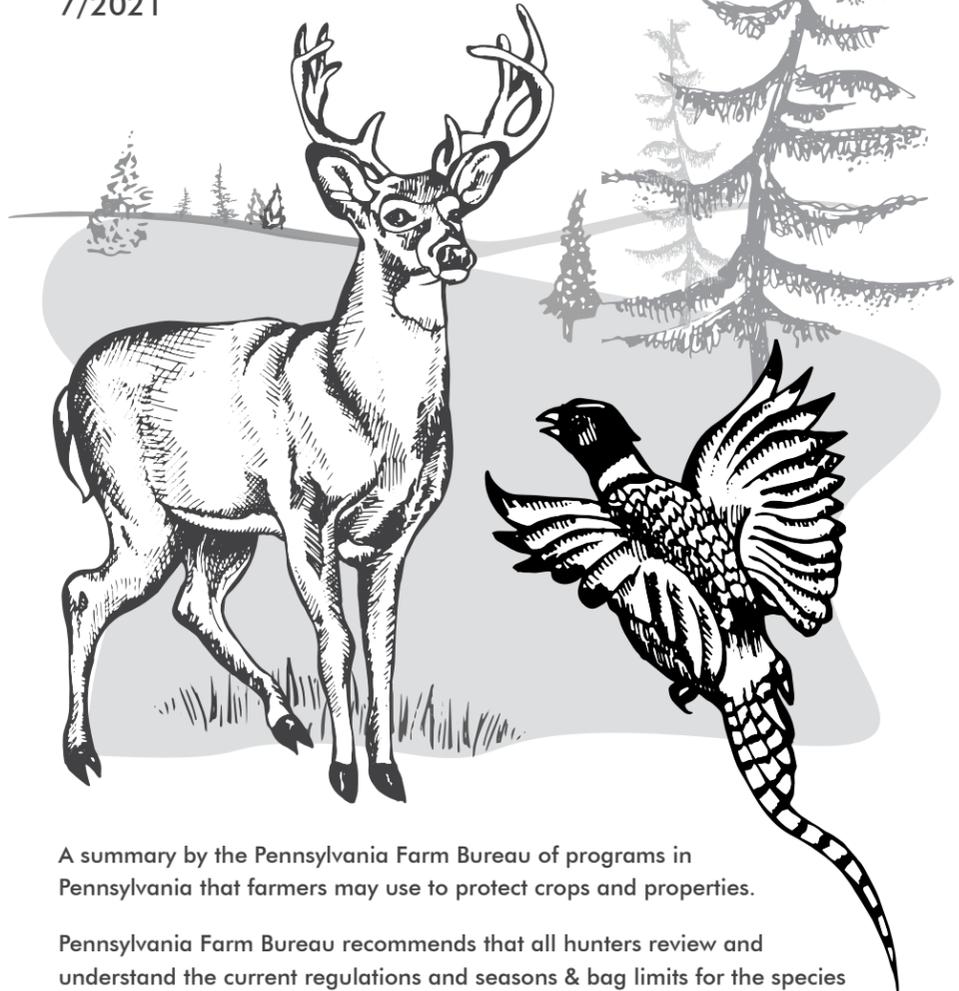


This brochure is not meant to be the complete Game and Wildlife Code or regulations of the Game Commission, and should not be considered the final word in matters of interpretation. Ask a wildlife conservation officer before you act.

**For more information contact:**  
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# Farmers' Rights and Obligations

Pertaining to the Game and Wildlife Code  
7/2021



A summary by the Pennsylvania Farm Bureau of programs in Pennsylvania that farmers may use to protect crops and properties.

Pennsylvania Farm Bureau recommends that all hunters review and understand the current regulations and seasons & bag limits for the species they hunt. Multiple changes were made affecting several species and the regulations may differ greatly from past hunting seasons.

Under both programs the permits are specific to the property they are issued, and are for trees, and vegetables. The Red Tag Program is explained more fully in Question 12. "Red Tag" or Agricultural Deer Control Permits are used during the "growing season" to reduce deer on commercial agricultural properties experiencing damage to crops, fruits, and are for harvest of doe only.

DMAF which stands for Deer Management Assistance Program is a permit program that allows landowners to use hunters during the regular deer hunting seasons to reduce overabundant deer. The DMAF Program is explained more fully in Questions 8 through 11.

**7. What permit hunting is available to landowners to control deer damage?**

Act 26 also allows the use of certain spotlights and flashlights in the taking of furbearing animals, such as raccoons, skunks and foxes. The lights must be handheld or mounted on the hunter's head or firearm.

The regulations allow immediate program sign-up for properties within Special Regulations areas. Landowners in counties outside of Special Regulations must be in access programs for a minimum of two-years, and if the species to be killed is deer, they must have deer control permits. Game taken may not be kept for consumption by the farmer or hunter, but must be handled as game shot for crop damage; the PGC must be notified within 24-hours of the shooting, and game is to be dressed and put in a place of safekeeping for conservation officer pick-up.

within 24-hours – see below.  
Commission regional office. All game taken must be reported to the Game Commission Donation to qualifying food banks must be coordinated and approved by your Game banks and organizations like "Hunters Sharing the Harvest" for distribution to the needy. Game may not be kept for personal consumption, but may be given to authorized food taken may be taken 24-hours-per-day under this provision. Under this program game Game may be taken 24-hours-per-day under this provision. Under this program game

Act 26 of 2007 (further detailed in Regulations 147.761-147.765), allows farmers to get additional help in controlling the number of wildlife causing damage to farm crops. Farmers may obtain permits from the Game Commission authorizing up to two subpermittees other than family members and employees to assist the farmer in shooting game for crop damage. Subpermittees must be PA residents and hold a current PA hunting license to qualify.

**6. How may farmers get help shooting game for crop damage?**

was open to public hunting and was not within an area in which a deterrent fence was built, and (2) the entire edible portion of any previously killed and retained deer, bear or elk has been consumed. If an animal is kept for food, it may only be eaten in the household of the person making the kill. The head and hide of an animal kept for food consumption must be properly salted, placed in safe keeping and turned over to a Game Warden. (Code - Section 2124)

A person entitled to kill animals for crop and livestock protection (see question 4) may keep one deer, bear or elk, if both of the following exist: (1) the land on which the kill occurred

**5. May animals killed for protection of crops or livestock be kept for consumption?**

2121-2123, 2125, and 2126(a)) animal (see question 5) or unless otherwise directed by a Game Warden. (Code - Sections and at a safe place pending final disposition, unless the person is entitled to keep the hours. The entire carcass of the bird or animal killed, less entrails, must be kept intact game for crop or livestock protection must report the kill to a Game Warden within 24 raised on any farmlands under your control, including detached lands. A person killing to cause, damage to farm crops, fruit trees, vegetables, livestock, poultry or bee-hives and regularly hired farm help may kill game or wildlife witnessed to be causing, or about Yes, members of your household, non-household family members helping with the farm,

**4. As a farmer may I protect myself against crop or livestock damage?**

living in the same household as the owner. (Code - Section 2706(d)) license is limited to one per farm, either the operator or an immediate family member may purchase a resident landowner license for \$3.00, plus the current issuing fee. The - Section 2706(c)) If you own 80 or more contiguous acres farmed under a conservation public hunting and you may only hunt in the county where the license is issued. (Code regular fee, a doe license in advance of the general public. Your land must be open to Yes, if you own fifty or more contiguous acres within a county, you may apply for, at the

**3. Are there any other special license provisions available for farmers?**

Yes, you may hunt without a license on any privately owned adjacent lands as long as you secure written consent of the adjacent owner or lessee. (Code - Section 2706(a))

**2. Are there additional areas where we may hunt without a license?**

Yes, if farming is a primary means of gaining a livelihood, you and your immediate family, as owner, lessee or tenant, as well as any regular hired help, may hunt without a license during regular hunting seasons on the property you farm including detached lands within ten air miles from the home farm. All persons entitled to hunt without a license must be at least 12 years old and must either have been issued a hunting license at a previous time or have been issued a hunter education certificate from the Game Commission. A person privileged to hunt without a license will lose this privilege if subject to suspension or revocation of a hunting license. (Code - Section 2706(a))

**1. As a farm family living in Pennsylvania, may we hunt on our farm without a license?**



## 8. How do I enroll my property into DMAP?

Farmland will normally qualify for DMAP enrollment, if the land is privately owned or leased. The applicant must be able to demonstrate crop or tree damage from deer. Property may be enrolled, regardless of whether or not it is posted.

- The application must be made each year, between the end of the last deerhunting season and July 1.
- Coupons redeemed for DMAP permits are not part of the doe license allocation in any of the Wildlife Management Units (WMUs).
- A person owning/leasing more than one property may obtain DMAP permits for separate properties. If the properties are 1 mile or less apart, separate DMAP permits for each property may be obtained if the properties are being managed under a Commission approved management plan. (*Regulations 147.673(a) and (b)*)

## 9. How does the DMAP permit program work?

DMAP coupons are issued to an enrolled property owner/lessee on the basis of one-per five acres of cultivated land or one-per fifty acres of forestland. Property owners distribute their DMAP coupons to licensed hunters with a current PA resident or non-resident hunting license. Landowners may not charge or accept any contribution from a hunter for a DMAP coupon.

Hunters redeem DMAP coupons for a DMAP antlerless deer permits, paying to the Game Commission the set fee for DMAP permits. Each permit can be used to harvest one antlerless deer on the specific DMAP property.

Landowners may issue up to two DMAP coupons to each PA licensed hunter for each DMAP property. The owner of DMAP land must supply each permitted hunter with an approved map of the property. The map must show the property's boundaries and enable the hunter to stay within the property when using the map. (*Regulation 147.673(a)(1)*)

## 10. How do hunters redeem a DMAP coupon for DMAP permit?

DMAP coupons may be redeemed for DMAP permits over the counter at any Game Commission PALS (Pennsylvania Automated Licensing System) agent, or online at [www.huntfish.pa.gov](http://www.huntfish.pa.gov). When redeeming a DMAP coupon for a DMAP permit the hunter must pay the current fee established for each DMAP permit obtained.

Hunters may obtain up to four DMAP permits for any given property enrolled in DMAP.

## 11. When are DMAP permits valid for hunting?

DMAP permits are only for antlerless deer, but may be used during any open antlered or antlerless deer hunting season. Hunters may possess up to four DMAP permits for the

**Property damage:** It is unlawful for any person, while hunting game or wildlife or taking furbearers, to cause or assist in causing damage to real or personal property. Also, it is unlawful to leave gates or bars open, break down or destroy fences, or tear down or scatter rail, post, wood or stone piles. It is unlawful to harass, injure or kill livestock of any kind. (*Code - Section 2509*)

**Hunter trespass:** The game and wildlife code prohibits persons from hunting or trapping in any unharvested buckwheat, corn, sorghum or soybean fields without permission of the owner or person in charge of the property. (*Code - Section 2509*)

Act 107 of 2019 makes trespassing while hunting a primary offense, which makes it easier for Game Wardens to cite hunters who trespass on private property. A hunter caught trespassing on private property can be charged with a third-degree summary offense, which carries a minimum penalty of \$250. In addition, if a hunter defies an order from a landowner to leave, the hunter can be charged with a misdemeanor, which carries a maximum penalty of a \$3,000 fine and 6 months jail time. Any person who commits two hunting trespass violations within a seven-year period will face a misdemeanor charge for the second offense and lose the privilege to hunt in Pennsylvania for one year. (*Code - Sections 2314 (a) and (c)*)

A hunter who fails to obtain prior written permission to hunt on private land on the Sundays authorized in Act 107 will face an additional third-degree summary offense with a minimum \$250 fine. (*Code - Section 2315*)

**Littering:** It is unlawful for any person, while hunting or trapping, to deposit or leave any garbage, bottles, cartons, glass, paper, or debris other than in a receptacle maintained for that purpose. (*Code - Section 2510*)



**Restrictions on Vehicles:** It is unlawful to drive a motor vehicle while hunting or trapping on any cleared land except with the permission of persons in charge of the land. Also, it is unlawful to park a vehicle thus restricting entry to or exit from a person's property, cattleway or field. (*Code - Section 2510*)

**Damage to Trees:** It is unlawful, while hunting or preparing to hunt for game or wildlife, to cause damage to any trees located on public or private lands as a result of use of a tree stand, unless written permission is given in advance. (*Code - Section 2511*)

**Landowner Liability:** July 2007, the PA legislature amended Pennsylvania's landowner liability protection extending protection of landowners whom allow free access for hunting, from liability to include any injury to persons or property, "wherever such persons or property are located". This Act addresses lawsuits for accidents or injuries on or off the property where free access is permitted.

property they are hunting when issued by the landowner. DMAP permits may only be used on the DMAP property for which they are issued. (*Regulation 147.675*)

## 12. What is the Red Tag Program?

Deer Control Permits allow farmers to receive deer depredation permits in this program referred to by farmers as "Red Tag". Red Tag Permits are distributed directly to licensed hunters by the enrolled landowner. A farmer can obtain a maximum of one of these sub-permits, per five acres of cultivated land, unless the wildlife conservation officer determines the need for additional allocations. Each sub-permit allows a licensed hunter to take one antlerless deer. Permits are valid from February 1 to September 30 each calendar year excluding Sunday. The permit will not be valid between May 16 and June 30.

Recent changes require farmers outside the southeastern Special Regulations Area to enroll and use both Red Tag and the Cooperative Farm Game Program (hunter access program) at the same time. This eliminates a two-year requirement to use the access program before being able to enroll in Red Tag.

Applicants in the southeastern Special Regulations Area (all of Bucks, Chester, Delaware, Montgomery and Philadelphia counties) are not required to enroll in the Cooperative Farm/Game Program to enroll in Red Tag. (*Regulations 147.551 - 147.559*)

## 13. Who may use bait to take game?

Red Tag applicants from the southeastern Special Regulations Areas (counties listed in #12) only may be eligible to obtain approval to engage in limited baiting activities to enhance deer control activities on their properties. Bait for use for hunting or deer control is illegal in all other areas. (*Regulations 147.552(d)*)

## 14. Are any funds available for payment of damage claims?

Reimbursement for damages is presently limited to livestock, poultry and beehives and equipment damaged by bears (subject to a total annual expenditure of \$50,000), and to livestock, poultry or game birds damaged by coyotes (subject to a total annual expenditure of \$20,000). Bear damage claims should be made to the Game Commission and coyote damage claims should be made to the Department of Agriculture, Dog Law Enforcement Agency. (*Regulations 147.551- 556 and Act 63 of 1988*) The Dog Law also provides for reimbursement of damages to livestock or poultry caused or believed to have been caused by dogs, as well as coyotes.

## 15. What are my property rights regarding hunters?

**Safety zones:** It is unlawful for any person other than the lawful occupant to hunt, trap, pursue or disturb any game or wildlife within 150 yards around a dwelling, barn or stable without specific advance permission of the occupant. A safety zone of 50 yds. is established for archery and crossbow hunting. (*Code - Section 2505*)

## 16. What is the cooperative Farm-Game Program and what benefits are there for me as a farmer?

The cooperative Farm-Game Program began in 1936. It includes provisions intended to assure farm residents protection against acts no responsible sportsman would condone. Another objective is to provide public hunting opportunities on lands previously closed. A project area is made up of a contiguous group of farms comprising at least 1,000 acres. An agreement is signed by which hunting rights are made available to the Game Commission for five years or more.

Benefits to farmers cooperating in the Farm-Game program include:

- Commission will post safety zone notices or provide signs.
- Cooperator may retain control over trapping of fur-bearing animals.
- Cooperators may be included in pheasant stocking programs when extra birds are available for this purpose.
- Cooperator lands are patrolled by conservation officers, when project areas are being hunted, for protection of life and property.
- Cooperators are furnished vines, shrubs and trees, providing cover for game.
- Commission may cut woodland borders and hedgerows.
- Nest boxes may be provided as available for several species.



## 17. Additional Resources to Control Damages

USDA APHIS Wildlife Services is a federal agency providing technical assistance and direct management response to resolve wildlife damages through a wide variety of resources.

Fees for programs under Wildlife Services are funded by a combination of federal appropriations and from those receiving services.

Wildlife Services can assist with technical assistance and on the ground programs to control livestock predation, wild bird, and mammal damage to agricultural crops, fruits, vegetables and nuts. There are specific programs for feral swine, black birds, coyote, and geese, as well as special permits for some species with federal protection.

Contact the Pennsylvania USDA Wildlife Services offices in Harrisburg for further details at 717-236-9451.