Hunters donate their deer meat

SHARRI MACWINAGE Staff Reporter

While the hunting season is not good news for deer, it could be good news for some fortunate Missourians.

"The deer meat donation program, Share the Harvest, may be the greatest thing that happened since hunting season," said Lonnie Hansen, statewide deer management coordinator. "It helps people who want to do the sport of hunting, but they really don't want the meat. ... A lot of people are so kind to help other people because some people have a hard time getting food." 

Hunters have donated deer to the Share the Harvest program since 2001. "The share-the-hunt season, we have [gotten] as much as 15,000 pounds of meat in a season to donate to people," said Hansen. "And if we were doing it this year, we would get at least 10,000 pounds. I know we would." 

Junior Tyler Killen said he has been hunting for about 10 years. Killen said his family has been participating in the Share the Harvest program since he was 15. "We have sold venison for the Share the Harvest program since he began hunting. We said the amount of deer they donate depends on how many deer they kill," Killen said. "The program was used to be free to donate meat," Killen said. "But now you have to pay to do it." 

"We have seen a great amount of donations in the past years when they participated in the Share the Harvest program," Killen said. "In 2008, Kirksville was voted the No. 1 deer hunting city in the country. We were doing it this year, we would get at least 10,000 pounds for the season to donate the meat." 

"Deer population is always, always high here in the Midwest," Killen said. "So [there] are a lot of deer out there to kill." 

Killen said there is a truck in the local area that carries the venison to a processing facility. "The hunters in Kirksville can donate their meat," Killen said. "They can help me to make meat that is being legally harvested." Killen said, "If you have a deer and you want to sell it to me, write a check or give them $10, and I think that is all about you need to do." 

"For white-tailed male deer, the breeding season is referred to as the rut," Hansen said. "Does come into heat and breed around as the rut," Hansen said. "For white-tailed male deer, the breeding season is referred to as the rut," Hansen said. "Does come into heat and breed around as the rut," Hansen said. "We have seen venison for the Share the Harvest program since he was 15. "We have sold venison for the Share the Harvest program since he began hunting. We said the amount of deer they donate depends on how many deer they kill," Killen said. "The program was used to be free to donate meat," Killen said. "But now you have to pay to do it." 

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