

**571—106.16(481A) Deer depredation management.** The deer depredation management program provides assistance to producers through technical advice and additional deer licenses and permits where the localized reduction of female deer is needed to reduce damage. Upon signing a depredation management agreement with the department, producers of agricultural or high-value horticultural crops shall be issued, consistent with this rule, deer depredation licenses and deer shooting permits to shoot deer causing excessive crop damage. If immediate action is necessary to forestall serious damage, depredation licenses or shooting permits may be issued before an agreement is signed. Further licenses or permits will not be authorized until an agreement is signed.

**106.16(1) Method of take and other regulations.** Legal weapons and restrictions will be governed by 571—106.11(481A). For deer shooting permits only, there are no shooting hour restrictions; however, taking deer with an artificial light is prohibited by Iowa Code section 481A.93. The producer or designee must meet the deer hunters' orange apparel requirement in Iowa Code section 481A.122.

**106.16(2) Eligibility.** Producers growing typical agricultural crops (such as corn, soybeans, hay and oats and tree farms and other forestlands under a timber management program) and producers of high-value horticultural crops (such as Christmas trees, fruit or vegetable crops, nursery stock, and commercially grown nuts) shall be eligible to enter into depredation management agreements if these crops sustain excessive damage.

- a. The producer may be the landowner or a tenant, whoever has cropping rights to the land.
- b. Excessive damage is defined as crop losses exceeding \$1,000 in a single growing season, or the likelihood that damage will exceed \$1,000 if preventive action is not taken, or a documented history of at least \$1,000 of damage annually in previous years.
- c. Producers who lease their deer hunting rights are not eligible for the deer depredation management program.

**106.16(3) Depredation management plans.** Upon request from a producer, field employees of the wildlife bureau will inspect and identify the type and amount of crop damage. If deer damage is not excessive, technical advice will be given to the producer on methods to reduce or prevent future damage. If damage is excessive and the producer agrees to participate, a depredation management plan will be developed by depredation biologists in consultation with the producer.

a. The goal of the management plan will be to reduce damage to below excessive levels within a specified time period through a combination of producer-initiated preventive measures and the issuance of deer depredation permits.

(1) Depredation plans may require preventive measures such as harassment of deer with pyrotechnics and cannons, guard dogs, temporary fencing, permanent fencing costing less than \$1,000, allowing more hunters, increasing the take of antlerless deer, and other measures.

(2) Depredation permits to shoot deer may be issued to Iowa residents to reduce deer numbers until long-term preventive measures become effective. Depredation permits will not be used as a long-term solution to deer damage problems.

b. Depredation management plans will normally be written for a three-year period with progress reviewed annually by the department and the producer.

- (1) The plan will become effective when signed by the depredation biologist and the producer.
- (2) Plans may be modified or extended if mutually agreed upon by the department and the producer.
- (3) Depredation permits will not be issued after the initial term of the management plan if the producer fails to implement preventive measures outlined in the plan.

**106.16(4) Depredation permits.** Two types of permits may be issued under a depredation management plan.

a. Deer depredation licenses. Deer depredation licenses may be sold to resident hunters only for a fee of \$5 for use during one or more legal hunting seasons. Depredation licenses will be available to producers of agricultural and horticultural crops.

- (1) Depredation licenses will be issued up to the number specified in the management plan.
- (2) The landowner or an eligible family member, which shall include the landowner's spouse or domestic partner and juvenile children, may obtain one depredation license for each season established by the commission.

(3) Depredation licenses will be valid only for hunting antlerless deer, regardless of restrictions that may be imposed on regular deer hunting licenses in that county.

(4) All other regulations for the hunting season specified on the license apply.

(5) Depredation licenses are valid only on the land where damage is occurring and the immediately adjacent property unless the land is within a designated block hunt area as described in 106.16(4)“a”(6). Other parcels of land in the farm unit not adjacent to the parcels receiving damage will not qualify.

(6) Block hunt areas are areas designated and delineated by wildlife biologists of the wildlife bureau to facilitate herd reduction in a given area where all producers may not qualify for the depredation program or in areas of persistent deer depredation. Depredation licenses issued to producers within the block hunt area are valid on all properties within the delineated boundaries. Individual landowner permission is required for hunters utilizing depredation licenses within the block hunt area boundaries. Creation of a given block hunt area does not authorize trespass.

*b.* Deer shooting permits. Permits for shooting deer outside an established hunting season may be issued to producers of high-value horticultural crops when damage cannot be controlled in a timely manner during the hunting seasons (such as late summer buck rubs in an orchard and winter browsing in a Christmas tree plantation) and to other agricultural producers who have an approved department deer depredation plan, and on areas such as airports where public safety may be an issue.

(1) Deer shooting permits will be issued for a fee of \$5 to the applicant.

(2) The applicant or one or more designees approved by the department may take all the deer specified on the permit.

(3) Permits available to producers of high-value horticultural crops or agricultural crops may be valid for taking deer outside of a hunting season depending on the nature of the damage. The number and type of deer to be killed will be determined by a department depredation biologist and will be part of the deer depredation management plan.

(4) Permits issued due to public safety concerns may be used for taking any deer, as necessary, to address unpredictable intrusion that could jeopardize public safety. Permits may be issued for an entire year (January 1 through December 31) if the facility involved signs an agreement with the department.

(5) All deer killed must be recovered and processed for human consumption.

(6) The times, dates, place and other restrictions on the shooting of deer will be specified on the permit.

(7) Antlers from all deer recovered must be turned over to the conservation officer within 48 hours. Antlers will be disposed of according to department rules.

(8) For out-of-season shooting permits, there are no shooting hour restrictions; however, taking deer with an artificial light is prohibited by Iowa Code section 481A.93.

*c.* Depredation licenses and shooting permits will be issued in addition to any other licenses for which the hunters may be eligible.

*d.* Depredation licenses and shooting permits will not be issued if the producer restricts the legal take of deer from the property sustaining damage by limiting hunter numbers below levels required to control the deer herd. This restriction does not apply in situations where shooting permits are issued for public safety concerns.

*e.* A person who receives a depredation permit pursuant to this paragraph shall pay a \$1 fee for each license that shall be used and is appropriated for the purpose of deer herd population management, including assisting with the cost of processing deer donated to the help us stop hunger (HUSH) program administered by the commission and a \$1 writing fee for each license to the license agent.

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