

Hunting is the most effective method for minimizing or reducing depredation over the long-term. Hunting can only be used within legal hunting seasons. State law does not allow harvest of deer outside of legal seasons.

- Allowing hunting access to property will improve deer harvest and distribute deer populations.
- Neighboring landowners can work together to increase hunting pressure in a specific area to reduce the deer population.
- Encouraging the harvest of does will decrease the number of deer inhabiting an area.
- Landowners experiencing depredation problems or high deer populations may participate in the Department's public access program or hunter contact program to reduce deer numbers on their property.

The methods discussed in this brochure range from simple to complex. Each is effective in certain situations. Depredation can be frustrating and a financial drain for a landowner. While the Department cannot compensate landowners for losses, the Department does have resources available to help prevent or reduce depredation problems. If you have a depredation problem or see potential for a problem, contact a Game and Fish office in your area. You will receive a response within 24 hours and an on-site visit within 48 hours. Keeping a close watch on your livestock feed supplies will speed response time and limit damage. Planning ahead to prevent problems is, in the long run, the cheapest and best protection.

NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT DISTRICT OFFICES:

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(701) 328-6686 or (701) 328-6647
- **Devils Lake District Office**
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Devils Lake, ND 58301-8501
(701) 662-3617
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PLANNING AHEAD TO REDUCE DEER DEPREDATION

*Tips for farmers and ranchers for storing
and protecting winter livestock feed supplies*



NORTH DAKOTA GAME AND FISH DEPARTMENT

TIPS FOR PROTECTING LIVESTOCK FEED SUPPLIES:

High deer populations, if combined with severe winter conditions, can result in wildlife depredation to livestock feed supplies. Farmers and ranchers can plan ahead to protect hay and winter feed supplies from wildlife.

Depredation assistance is available from the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. The Department has many tools available to assist farmers and ranchers. Tools available range from technical assistance, temporary fencing, scare devices, repellents, permanent deer-proof hay yards, to hunting access/hunter contact programs. Although the Department can help, there are things farmers and ranchers can do to reduce deer depredation. Farmers and ranchers are encouraged to take action early to prevent situations that encourage depredation problems. In other words, do not wait until deer have “settled in” for the winter to address deer problems. The Department cannot provide damage compensation payments for wildlife damage to feed supplies, standing crops, trees, or grains piled on the ground.

Proper stacking of bales can reduce the amount of damage caused by depredating deer and other wildlife.

- Do not leave bales scattered in the field.
- Stack bales near headquarters if possible or at locations where there is activity to minimize depredation by deer.
- Place the bottom row of bales on end, it is much more difficult for deer to paw, or chew at the string side of a bale rather than the end.
- Place the second row on its string side on top of the bottom row. This will create a steep vertical edge to the bale stack, minimizing the ability of deer to jump up on the bales.

- Wrapping the bottom rows of the bales with plastic snow fence can help minimize depredation. Deer may continue to nibble through the fence, but losses should be minimal. The key to this method is to have a straight, vertical edge that the fence can be wrapped tight up against. Horizontal ledges allow deer to jump onto the stack where they can paw and chew at the bales.



Bottom row on end creates a steep vertical edge.

Bales stacked in the traditional 3-2-1 manner create a ledge for deer to jump on. Steep vertical edges are best.



- Surround the best quality alfalfa or most valuable hay inside a row of lower quality hay or straw to help minimize depredation. Deer will be less likely to eat the lower quality hay or straw.
- Consider net wrapping bales. Net wrapping provides more protection over conventional twine-wrapped bales.

- Stack the bales inside a deer-proof hay yard fence. Producers may be eligible to participate in the Department's deer-proof hay yard program.

Bales protected inside deer-proof hay yard fence.



Silage/Chopped Hay/Feed Grains Protection from depredating deer can be difficult but there are options:

- Surround silage/chopped hay/feed grains with lower quality hay or straw.
- Surround silage/chopped hay/feed grains with cattle panels or welded wire panels.
- Surround silage/chopped hay/feed grains with an electric fence.

Silage protected with panels.

