

In favor of HB1151 relating to deer baiting

I've been hunting for nearly 25 years. I've been fortunate to harvest a lot of deer over the course of that time, and truth be told a lot have been shot over a pile of corn. I would prefer to sit in a tree along a well-travelled trail along the river bottoms and wait them out, but both fortunately and unfortunately that isn't feasible anymore. My family's land is a chunk of pasture land that was purchased for hunting. We graze cattle on it in the summer and given the soil conditions and costs associated with it, the chance of making a food plot is slim to none for us. There's no rhyme or reason to where these cagey critters travel. Again, getting back to not having the time like I used to, I resort to setting out feed. It gives me the best opportunity to see something in the short amount of time I have.

Now, I have an 8-year-old who is way more passionate about hunting than I was at his age. Today, he even brought home a book about Bowhunting from the school library. Bowhunting of all things. I want him to be able to enjoy being outdoors and be able to see, experience, and hopefully soon have an opportunity to harvest an animal, and for our family, setting out feed is essential to the way we hunt. We hear so many times that we need to get young people involved. Why would we take opportunity away from them? Yes, there are more ways to get them involved or excited about hunting than just setting out a bucket of corn. Again, I don't judge anyone for doing it or not doing it. But this is how WE choose to do it on OUR PRIVATE PROPERTY!!! I personally don't think by doing this it makes anyone less of a hunter or outdoorsman. We still control our scent and play the wind and do all the other things everyone else does. We respect nature just the same as those who choose to hunt without bait. But this is how we choose because it's legal.

Plain and simple. If people want to bait deer on private property, they should be able to. Banning baiting for the sake of saving these animals from catching and spreading CWD isn't going to solve the problem. When the weather gets tough like it is this year, these deer herd up. 50-100 deer will eat from the same small bare hilltop in the middle of an ag field for the next 3 months, or they might sit on top of each other in a hay yard. There's no way a feed pile is going to make a difference or hurt them anymore or less than what's happening now.

If you haven't seen firsthand a kid's face light up with a grin from ear to ear when those critters walk in, I suggest you take the time to try and experience it. This was one of my favorite memories with my boy, and I don't think it would have happened without our chosen way of hunting, by baiting deer.

Jeremy W