

WILDLIFE TRENDS

SOUTHEASTERN EDITION

February 2001

Volume 1, Issue 2

Supplemental Feed and White-tailed Deer

By: Dr. M. Keith Causey

Age, genetics, and nutrition are the critical components for quality white-tailed deer management. Most deer enthusiasts have heard or read this statement many times during the past 15 years. Whether or not the original article, seminar speaker, or television program narrator emphasized these deer management puzzle pieces in that order, nutrition certainly has received the least attention by most managers. However, nutrition, in my professional opinion, is the key to sustained production of large-bodied deer and big-antlered bucks in most southeastern habitats. Until deer nutrition is adequately addressed, we can, in my opinion, toss "deer genetics" out the window.

Does Population Reduction Make Remaining Deer Better?

The simplistic approach to addressing our particular problems with deer nutrition has been to reduce deer density by increased emphasis on harvesting more deer, especially an antlerless deer. While we cannot overemphasize the importance of population (deer density) control, our efforts have been too little too late.

Obviously, population control ultimately is critical to quality deer management, but population control, in and of itself, does not necessarily result in physical improvement of the remaining deer in many areas of the Southeast.

Studies from Florida, Georgia, South Carolina, Alabama, and elsewhere have provided data indication that, after many years of intensive population reduction, there has been no significant improvement in body and/or antler size by sex and age-class of the deer population under study. It appears that food quality for the remaining deer often is no better than before population reductions occurred. Population reduction often does not address the major impediment to quality white-tailed deer management. Without nutritional improvement to go along with population management, we simply wind up with fewer deer of the same physical dimensions as before.



In this Issue

- Supplemental Feed & White-tailed Deer
- New Deer Repellant
- Release Birds - Post Season Habitat Check
- Stocking Recreational Fishing Ponds
- Eradication of Problem Grasses
- Purple Martins
- Coach Pat Dye: Building Strength Lime and Fertilizer

Visit us at
www.wildlifetrends.com

E-Mail us at
wildlifetrends@home.com

Call us at
 1-800-441-6826