

Program Summary – WI Deer Donation Program

Wisconsin Deer Donation Program

The Wisconsin Deer Donation program is designed to use existing Wildlife Damage Abatement and Claims Program (WDACP) funds to pay for the processing of deer harvested and donated by hunters in Wisconsin. The venison is then processed and distributed (free of charge) to people in need across the state of Wisconsin. The intent of the program is to increase the deer harvest in areas of high abundance and to reduce agricultural damage in the future. Through the program, families in need receive ground venison, and hunters help manage Wisconsin's deer herd by donating harvested deer to a worthwhile cause. For all involved, the program promotes a positive public image of deer hunting, the organizations involved, and those who participate in and promote Wisconsin deer hunting.

How the Program Works

Counties (or their agents – USDA-Wildlife Services or a non-profit organization) are responsible for setting up the program, organizing venison processors and food pantries in their county to accept, process, transfer, and distribute the ground venison, advertising, and paying the invoices. They'll be the ones you sign a participation agreement with, and they're the best ones to ask when you have questions.

Hunters need only do six things:

1. Legally harvest a deer.
2. Field-dress the deer.
3. Register the deer and record the registration confirmation number.
4. Call a participating processor to verify that the processor has space to accept the hunter's deer.
5. Drop the deer off at the participating processor, during regular business hours, by January 7th.
6. Sign a log-in sheet at the processor to verify their donation. Hunters must donate the entire deer to receive the processing costs for free. The head and antlers may be removed for mounting.

Processors must sign an agreement with a county WDACP representative to participate in Wisconsin Deer Donation and must agree to follow all the terms of that agreement. The processor must have license for their processing facility from the U.S. Department of Agriculture or the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade, and Consumer Protection. The processor accepts donations and verifies that hunters log their deer in on the **Hunter Deer Donation Log Sheets**. The processor then grinds, packages, and freezes the donated meat. When the processor collects a sizable amount of venison and CWD testing results indicating that CWD was not detected are available, the processor arranges for pick-up of the ground venison with the contact person indicated on their agreement. One of the participating charitable organization representatives or volunteers picks up the meat within 48 hours and distributes it to the participating food pantries.