



## HUNTERS SHARING THE HARVEST

PENNSYLVANIA'S VENISON DONATION PROGRAM

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## MEDIA RELEASE

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**For Immediate Release**

### **Hunters Sharing the Harvest reports near-record venison donations during 2021-22 hunting seasons**

Greenville, PA – June 2, 2022 – Generous Pennsylvania deer hunters donated 187,426 pounds of venison in support of Hunters Sharing the Harvest (HSH) — Pennsylvania’s nationally emulated venison donation program — during the 2021-22 deer seasons with 4,691 deer donated statewide.

The recent season numbers are on-par with the 2020-21 season when 190,302 pounds were donated from 4,896 deer for a record year. This is significant considering the statewide deer harvest decreased approximately 13% according to the Pennsylvania Game Commission.

“These continued outstanding season donation numbers tell us that Pennsylvania hunters are becoming more aware of our mission and are taking advantage of the opportunity to donate deer in excess of what their families can consume,” said Randy Ferguson, executive director of Hunters Sharing the Harvest. “Our committed network of participating processors, area coordinators, food banks, funding partners and individual donors have created a model that is making a real difference in the lives of the food insecure in Pennsylvania. The public sees these results in their local communities and recognizes the sharing nature of the deer hunting community.”

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Based on the American Heart Association's recommended serving size of three ounces of lean red meat, the 187,426 pounds of venison donated during the 2021-22 season will provide about one million servings to the food insecure in Pennsylvania this year.

"On behalf of the entire board I'm delighted to congratulate the team on another terrific year," said Bill Sordoni, chairman of the HSH board of directors. "We deeply appreciate the hunters, our volunteer county coordinators, our various statewide partners and our generous donors for all of their collective efforts and support."

The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture has been a key supporting partner with HSH for many years, providing a substantial annual allocation to help HSH defray the costs associated with reimbursing participating processors for their services.

"The value of the generosity of Pennsylvania hunters cannot be overstated," said Pennsylvania Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding. "Thanks to their selfless donations, nearly 1 million additional servings of food are available for food-insecure Pennsylvanians. During the 2021-22 hunting season, the department committed to contributing a minimum of \$175,000 to support this important work. It is our hope that these funds, used to process donated meat, stretched hunters' generosity even farther during these challenging times. We extend our gratitude to Hunters Sharing the Harvest for the important work they do to connect hunters and hungry families."

With increased hunting opportunities and successful herd management practices in place, Pennsylvania hunters often find themselves filling more tags than their families need for the year. The Pennsylvania Game Commission recognizes and promotes the opportunity for hunters to use those additional tags to support the HSH mission, fulfilling the dual purpose of helping the PGC manage the statewide deer herd and exercising social responsibility.

"The Pennsylvania Game Commission is a proud supporter of Hunters Sharing the Harvest, our state's premiere venison donation program that successfully connects hunters, processors and food banks," said Pennsylvania Game Commission Executive Director Bryan Burhans. "Thank you to every hunter who made a difference by sharing their deer and providing a warm meal to Pennsylvanians in need."

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The HSH program is a coordinated effort of nearly 100 participating deer processors who accept donated deer from hunters and process the deer into one-, two- and five-pound packages of ground venison for distribution to regional food banks and food pantries.

“On behalf of the charitable food network, Feeding PA commends Hunters Sharing the Harvest and all of the hunters who donated this year to ensure that thousands of pounds of healthy, lean venison could be offered to families facing hunger,” said Jane Clements, chief executive officer of Feeding Pennsylvania.

In its 31 years of operation, HSH has delivered over 2 million pounds of hunter-donated venison, providing over 10 million servings to the food insecure across the Commonwealth.

“We at Hunger-Free Pennsylvania are so appreciative of Hunters Sharing the Harvest and the deer hunters around the state who share their bounty with fellow Pennsylvanians in need,” said Sheila Christopher, executive director of Hunger-Free Pennsylvania. “Our member agencies are always in dire need of fresh and nutritious protein sources. Venison is simply one of the best such sources – especially for those in such desperate need of nourishment.”

Hunters interested in donating a deer need only to legally harvest, tag and field dress the deer and take it to a participating processor near them. The list of participating processors by county can be found at <https://sharedeer.org/meat-processors/>.

HSH is actively seeking additional participating processors in counties throughout Pennsylvania. Participating processors are reimbursed for their services and are the cornerstone of the HSH mission.

“We have some counties in which hunters have to drive quite a distance to find their nearest HSH processor,” said Ferguson. “We want to make sure there is an HSH participating processor close to every hunter who wants to donate a deer. If you are a deer processor or know of a deer processor in your area that might want to be a part of HSH, I’d like to speak with them about working with us.”

A volunteer force of nearly 60 county coordinators ensure that processors have the resources they need and that the public is aware of the program and the ways they can support the HSH mission. A list of county coordinators is available at <https://sharedeer.org/area-coordinators/>. Individuals interested in

being a coordinator are encouraged to contact Ferguson at 866-474-2141 or by emailing him at [randy@sharedeer.org](mailto:randy@sharedeer.org).

Businesses wishing to support the mission of Hunters Sharing the Harvest are encouraged to become a sponsor. HSH offers multiple levels of sponsorship to fit any organization's budget. These supporting sponsors are a crucial source of operational support for the organization.

Those who do not hunt or who do not have extra deer to donate beyond their family's needs can support Hunters Sharing the Harvest with a monetary donation of any amount through the Buck for the Pot program. Donations can be made online at <https://sharedeer.org/support-our-mission/>.

More information on Hunters Sharing the Harvest can be found at [www.ShareDeer.org](http://www.ShareDeer.org).

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