

Deer Management Association Fact Sheet

What is a Deer Management Association?

It is simply a group of property owners and hunters working together to improve the quality of the deer herd and hunting experiences on their collective acreage.

Campbell Timberlands Management (Campbell) is hosting a series of informational meeting with club leaders regarding the formation of Deer Management Associations. Campbell believes that Deer Management Associations could provide significant benefits to its customers. Campbell has had great success with the Deer Management Association concept. Campbell knows that the support of area hunters is essential for a Deer Management Association to be successful. In order to assess participant's interests in QDM programs, Campbell recently conducted a survey of hunting clubs in Texas. The survey shows very strong support for Quality Deer Management (QDM) among Campbell's customers (Fig.1)

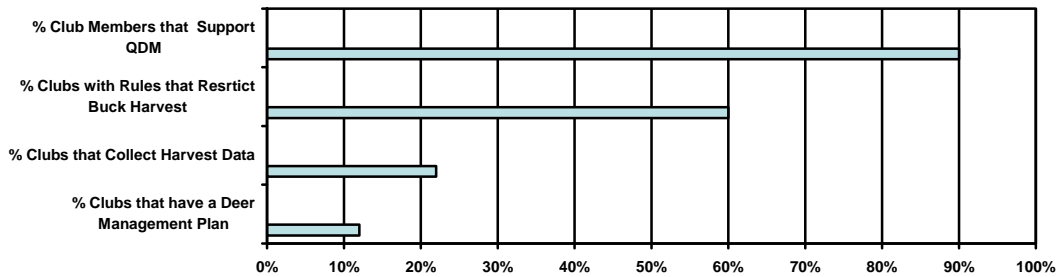


Figure 1. Campbell Customer Survey

The survey showed that many clubs are implementing buck harvest restrictions on the lands they lease from Campbell; however, only a small percentage of clubs are collecting harvest records or have a deer management plan. Campbell believes that Deer Management Associations could help their customers achieve their deer management objectives.

Benefits of a Deer Management Association

Perhaps the most obvious benefit is the opportunity to hunt a high-quality deer herd containing mature bucks

The sluggish U.S. economy has made it difficult for many clubs to maintain full membership. A high-quality deer herd containing mature bucks is very attractive to prospective club members. While others continue to struggle to find club members, clubs participating in an Association often have long membership waiting lists.

Associations enable hunters with a small leases the ability to participate in Quality Deer Management. Landowners and hunting clubs participating in an Association have the management advantage a large contiguous property under a common deer harvest strategy.

Better relationships among neighboring landowners and hunters are another benefit often realized by association participants. As the group works to improve the deer herd they develop a sense of mutual respect and trust; which leads to improved relations between all involved: neighboring landowners, neighboring hunting clubs as well as Campbell and its lessees.

Another important benefit of an Association is enhanced protection of the forest and wildlife resources. As hunters unite to produce quality deer, they will have an increased interest in preventing trespass, and poaching. In many cases, trespass and poaching may go unnoticed because hunters do not know who is authorized to access adjoining properties. As hunters and neighboring landowners get to know each other, Associations often function in a manner similar to a neighborhood watch in preventing all manner of rural crime such as arson, burglary, dumping as well as poaching and trespass.

As result of the economy of scale, management costs can often be reduced. For example, there can be substantial savings when food plot materials such as lime, fertilizer, food plot seed, and other items purchased in bulk. Hunters might realize additional saving by sharing of farm equipment and or facilities such as a check station, or shooting range.

Ultimately Associations lead to increased deer herd quality and, improved hunter satisfaction. A quality deer herd makes it much easier for hunting clubs to recruit and retain quality hunting club members.

Economy of Scale - Why Size Matters?

Associations give hunters the opportunity to share resources and better manage the density, and demographics of an area's deer herd.

The success of a club's Quality Deer Management program may be limited due to the acreage under their management. It can be difficult on small properties to establish and manipulate deer density, sex ratio, or age structure because many of these deer spend much of their lives on adjacent lands. This makes it nearly impossible to control deer density and improve buck age structure. That is why QDM programs on small properties often fail. By implementing a Quality Deer Management program across a larger area, it is possible to effectively manage these herd characteristics.

In many cases, the number of deer harvested on small properties is so small and variable that harvest data are of limited value. The pooling of harvest and observation data provides reliable data and enables a wildlife biologist to base management recommendations on accurate information.

Several thousand acres are required to contain the normal movements of bucks. The average home range of adult bucks ranges from several hundred to a few thousand acres. Most bucks disperse several miles from their birth area between the ages of 6 and 24 months. A larger management area enables a greater percentage of the deer herd to be encompassed under a common management program. Successful QDM programs typically encompass 5,000 or more acres. In most cases the larger the area under management the better.

Organization & Management

Typically Associations include an advisory board comprised of representatives from hunting clubs and a governing board comprised of the Association's landowners.

Beginning with the 2012-13 hunting season, Campbell will organize its lessees that are collectively leasing large ownership blocks into Deer Management Associations. Campbell will actively solicit the participation of neighboring landowners. Initially, Campbell will facilitate Association meetings and provide the support needed for Association formation. Campbell's long term goal is for area hunting clubs to lead the Association. Campbell has seen that successful Associations include hunters in the decision-making process. This results in hunter ownership in and commitment to achieving Association goals.

The Association will have a common deer management strategy which will include harvest quotas and buck harvest guidelines. Individual landowners or hunting clubs may opt to enact more stringent harvest requirements on their property or lease. Experience has shown that formal acknowledgement of Association participation is a good idea. Where neighboring landowners are involved, it might include a pledge from neighboring landowners and or club representatives indicating that they are willing to abide by the Associations harvest guidelines. For Campbell's lessees, mandatory participation in the Association would be part of the club's recreational lease agreement with Campbell.

What will be required?

Participation will be mandatory and will include harvest guidelines and collecting population & harvest data.

A club representative will be required to attend an annual Association meeting. Association clubs will be required to participate in Texas Parks & Wildlife's Managed Lands Deer Permit Program (MLDP) with the goal of achieving MLDP Level 3. This will include:

- Conducting Deer Surveys (e.g., Spotlight or Camera Surveys)
- Record Hunter Observations of Deer
- Buck and Doe harvest Quota
- Limit Buck Harvest to bucks that meet one of the following:
 - Bucks 3.5 years of age or older
 - Gross Boone Crocket Score of at least 120
- Collect Data from All Harvested Deer
 - Jawbone from each deer for age
 - Body weights
 - Check doe for lactation
 - Digital photo of bucks
 - Measure Buck Antlers