
Iowa Legislative Services Agency Fiscal Services

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Help Us Stop Hunger Program

ISSUE

This *Issue Review* provides an overview of the Help Us Stop Hunger (HUSH) Program.

AFFECTED AGENCIES

Department of Corrections
Department of Natural Resources

CODE AUTHORITY

Sections 483A.8 and 483A.24, Code of Iowa

BACKGROUND

The HUSH Program was established by the enactment of SF 397 (Deer Licenses Act) in 2003. The Act allowed hunters to donate harvested deer to the Food Bank of Iowa or to the Iowa Prison System. The Program began as a pilot project that operated in 55 counties in central and southern Iowa. During the 2003 hunting season, the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) estimated hunters would donate 1,000 deer, but the actual amount donated was 1,600. There were 30 meat processors that participated in the Program, and each received \$50 per deer. The Food Bank of Iowa received \$5 per deer for administrative costs. To help with Program expenses, 4,000 deer hunters donated \$5, which generated \$20,000 in revenue.

During the 2004 hunting season, the DNR estimated that 2,000 deer would be harvested and over 40 meat processors participated in the Program. During the 2004 hunting season, approximately 1,900 deer were donated. The processing payment was \$55 per deer and the Food Bank of Iowa received \$5 per deer for administrative costs. Due to increased costs, the DNR solicited donations from insurance companies and other Iowa businesses to supplement the Program and received \$130,000 in private donations to pay for expenses for the first two years.

In 2005, legislation was enacted to expand the Program statewide. This included a General Fund appropriation of \$17,000 to the DNR for the Program in HF 808 (FY 2005 Agriculture and Natural Resources Appropriations Act), and the creation of a new \$1 fee paid by resident

and nonresident deer hunters purchasing a hunting license in SF 206 (Deer Harvest Act). It was estimated that the fee revenue would pay for related Program expenditures. The 2005 goal was to harvest 5,000 deer, however, more than 6,000 deer were actually donated. This included 5,600 deer donated to the Food Bank of Iowa and 700 to the Prison Venison Program.

The fee generated over \$379,000 in revenue and with the \$17,000 appropriation, total resources were approximately \$396,000. Expenditures totaling \$386,000 included:

- \$60 meat processing fee per deer for a cost of \$341,000.
- \$5 payment per deer to the Food Bank of Iowa for a cost of \$28,000.
- Related DNR expenditures of \$17,000 for the following:
 - \$5,600 to purchase 5,000 HUSH hats to promote the Program.
 - \$1,000 for posters to be displayed at licensed vendors and meat processors.
 - \$2,500 for HUSH brochures.
 - \$5,700 for 200,000 freezer bags for meat processors.
 - \$200 for 10,000 cards to be completed by hunters donating deer.
 - \$2,000 for postage, printing, and supplies.

CURRENT SITUATION

For the 2006 hunting season, the DNR collected approximately \$366,000 from the fee paid by deer hunters, which was a 3.5% decrease compared to 2005. There were fewer landowner/tenant licenses issued in 2006 due to a new requirement that landowners must register their property prior to receiving the license.

There were over 6,600 deer donated during 2006. This included 6,482 for the HUSH Program, 275 for the Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry Program, and 63 for the Department of Corrections. Related expenditures totaled \$431,000 for the following:

- \$60 meat processing fee per deer for a cost of \$389,000.
- \$5 payment per deer to the Food Bank of Iowa for a cost of \$34,000.
- Related DNR expenditures of \$9,000 for the following:
 - \$700 for posters to be displayed at meat processors.
 - \$900 for HUSH brochures.
 - \$6,400 for 200,000 freezer bags for meat processors.
 - \$200 for 10,000 cards to be completed by hunters donating deer.
 - \$1,000 for postage, printing, and supplies.

Additional funding of \$42,000 was needed to pay 2006 expenses, which came from the Fish and Game Trust Fund.

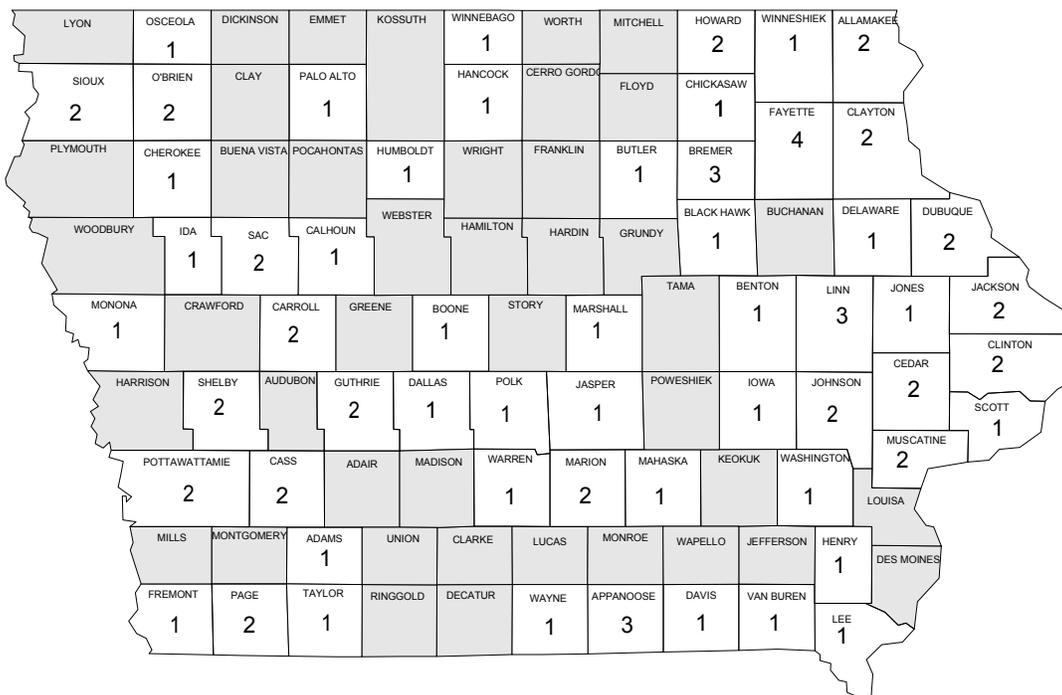
ADMINISTRATIVE RULES

The DNR filed Administrative Rules for the Program that became effective on October 3, 2007. The Rules created a HUSH Council that includes the HUSH Coordinator, a DNR employee designated by the Wildlife Bureau Chief, a representative from the Food Bank of Iowa, and the Meat and Poultry Inspection Bureau Chief in the Department of Agriculture and Land Stewardship.

The purpose of the Council is to determine price per deer to pay the meat processors and the Food Bank of Iowa. The Council will make recommendations to the DNR and assist in resolving conflicts or disputes.

The Council met in May 2007, and determined that the payment to the meat processors will be \$65 per deer and the Food Bank of Iowa will receive \$5 per deer for the 2007 hunting season. The following is a map that details counties with participating meat processors. There are currently 87 participating meat processors in the State.

HUSH Program Meat Processors



OTHER STATES

The majority of states participate in some type of venison meat donation program. The Farmers and Hunters Feeding the Hungry Program is a nationwide outreach ministry that provides venison to soup kitchens and food pantries. The Program began in 2001, and currently 27 states, including: Alabama, Arizona, Arkansas, California, Delaware, Florida, Georgia, Idaho, Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Mississippi, Missouri, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Oregon, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Texas, Vermont, West Virginia and Wisconsin participate. Wisconsin has a program similar to Iowa's, with hunters paying a \$2 fee per license. The table below summarizes what other state programs include.

State	Hunter Fee	Who Pays For Meat Processing
Alabama	No	Hunter can pay processing, but not required. Meat processor can be reimbursed \$1 per pound from Alabama Conservation Foundation.
Connecticut	No	Hunter
Georgia	No	Hunter – participants entered into a prize drawing.
Illinois	No	State
Maryland	Can donate \$1.00 per license	Hunter pays unless they donate an entire deer. Then reimbursed for meat processing.
Minnesota	Bonus license increased by \$1. Hunter can donate when purchasing license.	Hunter pays and cost share is available.
Missouri	No	Hunter pays unless they donate entire deer, and then they receive a \$20 rebate from the Shelter Insurance Company.
New Jersey	No	No more funding. Hunters can donate and pay processing fee.
Pennsylvania	No	Hunter pays and reimbursement may be available.
Tennessee	No	Hunter pays and can donate entire deer or portion.
Texas	No	Hunter pays but processing is at a reduced cost.
Virginia	No	Volunteer program. Hunter donating entire deer pays no processing. Hunter can donate a portion of the deer, but pays processing.
Wisconsin	\$2.00 per license	Funds used to pay for processing and for deer damage to farmer's land.

BUDGET IMPACT

For the 2007 hunting season, the DNR estimates there will be over 7,000 deer donated. The estimated Program costs for 7,000 deer are \$499,000 for the following:

- \$65 meat processing fee per deer for a cost of \$455,000.
- \$5 payment per deer to the Food Bank of Iowa for a cost of \$35,000.
- Related DNR expenditures of \$9,000.

If fee revenue would remain at the 2006 level of \$366,000, the DNR would need additional funding of \$133,000 from the Fish and Game Trust Fund.

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<http://www.legis.state.ia.us/lsadocs/IssReview/2008/IRDFK001.pdf>
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