

Motorists must be vigilant during “deer season”



Motorists are reminded to watch for deer along roadways, especially this time of year. June, October and November are peak months for deer-vehicle accidents, according to Bill Jensen, big game biologist for the North Dakota Game and Fish Department. “Motorists are advised to slow down and exercise caution after dark to reduce the likelihood of encounters with deer along roadways,” Jensen said.

Most deer-vehicle accidents occur during the dawn and dusk hours when deer are most active. “Deer-vehicle accidents are at times unavoidable,” he explained, adding, “Motorists should be aware of warning signs signaling deer are in the area.” Twenty-two percent of deer-vehicle accidents occur between 5:30 and 6:30 p.m. while 13 percent fall between 5:30 and 7:30 a.m. — during busy “drive times” as people go to and from work or school. An estimated 88 percent occur when it’s dark or light is limited. Deer-vehicle collisions have increased gradually over the past decade. Approximately 42

percent of annual deer-vehicle collisions occur during October, November and December, with 20 percent occurring from October 25 - November 25.

To reduce your chances of being involved in a car-deer collision, remember these rules.

- First, always wear a seat belt. This will reduce or prevent injuries should you hit a deer.
- North Dakota Farmers Union staff who conduct Defensive Driving Courses for Farmers Union Insurance policyholders advise drivers not to take evasive actions to avoid hitting a deer. The safest course of action is to stay in your lane and brake firmly. By trying to swerve around a deer you may lose control and hit another object such as another deer or a vehicle, or possibly roll your vehicle into the ditch. If you see deer ahead in the ditches or on the road, slow down and honk your horn.
- When you see one deer cross the road, look for a second or third deer to follow. Also, motorists are urged to pay attention on roadways posted with Deer Crossing Area caution signs, which are posted at areas which are known to have significant deer populations or are frequently used by deer moving between habitats.

• Deer whistles have not been proven to work. They do not project sound forward as does a vehicle horn that is powered by electricity or air. Deer do not hear ultrasonic frequencies.