

**Report from DNR regarding citizen petition to allow the baiting of deer when deer hunting; Administrative Cause No. 16-031D**

The DNR has chosen not to pursue this regulation change at this time to allow the baiting of deer.

To provide background, the DNR prohibits the use or aid of bait to hunt deer in 312 IAC 9-3-2(u). Liquids, sold, placed food and other bait, feeders, corn, salt licks, piles of apples, and any other products considered to be bait, as well as the affected soil, must be removed at least 10 days prior to hunting the deer there. Food plots are not illegal unless activities are done to keep the plants, seed, or other food source on the ground that is not part of a normal agricultural process. It is legal to feed deer, but it is not legal to hunt over bait. While hunting deer, if the hunter will have the ability to take a deer from where there is bait (such as apples, a salt block, liquid bait, a feeder or other means to attract the deer), then it is illegal to hunt them there. There is no distance from where the bait has to be from a hunter in the law, but it must be evident by a conservation officer that the hunter was not hunting with the use or aid of bait. For example, the hunter cannot hunt them somewhere where deer eating the bait cannot be seen.

Diseases such as bovine tuberculosis, which has been found in a wild deer in Franklin County, as well as chronic wasting disease, can be spread through nose-to-nose contact of deer at bait sites. Increasing the opportunity for these diseases to spread by allowing bait does not protect the wild deer population.

Additionally, research out of Michigan that has shown that allowing baiting for the entire season, though contributing to an increase in sightings of deer, did not increase the harvest of deer.

The DNR also has concerns regarding baiting unnaturally congregating animals on individual properties, which has the ability to disrupt their natural movement patterns and may affect other hunter's deer sightings.

For these reasons, the DNR does not support the allowance of baiting during the hunting season at this time.