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DEER DAMAGE INCURRED BY HOMEOWNERS DURING 1995 IN VIRGINIA

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Abstract: Damage caused by white-tailed deer (*Odocoileus virginianus*) is a problem for some homeowners in Virginia. As part of a broader effort to evaluate the attitudes and perceptions of agricultural producers and homeowners toward deer damage in Virginia, a mail questionnaire was developed and implemented during the fall of 1996. The survey yielded 732 useable responses and, of those, 261 individuals indicated they were homeowners and grew at least one planting during 1995. Many homeowners (36%) indicated that deer caused damage to at least one of their plantings during 1995. Of those who had experienced damage, most (61%, n=57) indicated that deer damage had been moderate to severe. A significant linear relationship was found between the reported damage severity and the reported percentage of plants that were affected by deer. A majority (57%) of those who incurred deer damage believed that damage was higher in 1995 than in the previous 5-year period. Damage occurred most often during the later spring and early summer. Many homeowners (n=119) indicated a willingness to pay for damage prevention, yet fewer (n=71) actually used preventive measures during 1995. Overall, the most often used form of prevention was the use of repellents, followed by fencing. Most respondents (64%) wanted a decrease in the deer population and a significant relationship was found between damage severity and a desire to reduce the deer population in Virginia.

Key Words: deer damage, homeowners, *Odocoileus virginianus*, prevention, survey, white-tailed deer

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