From: DW Berger
To: michelle.L.tate@state.or.us
Subject: Elk Damage
Date: Wednesday, December 02, 2015 1:01:55 PM

Dear ODFW Board,

My name is Derek Berger. I co-manage Berger Seed Company, which started in the Helvetia area, and has been farming for five generations in the area. I have also been hunting the local elk for just over 20 years.

The elk population down in the Ag areas has significantly increased over the last 5-7 years. The elk seem to be more comfortable being down low, feeding on the better feed (our crops) and hiding out in any little pocket of brush that will hide them. Unfortunately, I can say that every farmer north of Highway 26 has had significant damage from the elk in the last 5 years. We cannot afford the increased damage that is caused by the growing elk population anymore. This is a problem that ODWF and the local farmers are going to have to work together on. These elk are not going to magically go away as they have it too good in the Ag areas. The elk have great feed year round and plenty of private property to harbor them during the day. Around 95% of our damage occurs at night.

I am not convinced that ODFW is getting accurate elk numbers in the Scopes unit. I know where these elk hang out most days and there is no way you could see them in the thick timber and reprod using a helicopter. From what I have seen, the elk population where I farm and hunt has done nothing but go up and I am scared to see what the future holds for us farmers if no action is taken on these elk. I believe that there is plenty of good territory and feed for them to live and thrive up out of the Ag area. I feel that with harvesting some additional elk down in the Ag areas and with some additional constant harassment we could get most of these elk out of our fields. We need to be able to send the message that it's not ok to feed year round in our crops.

I am willing to help ODFW gather accurate information on the numbers of elk we are dealing with and the amount of money we are losing because of the damage the elk are causing to our crops. I feel that with adequate data we can come up with a plan that will be beneficial to both ODFW and land owners. Thank you for your time.

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