

**EAST GOSHEN TOWNSHIP
BOARD OF SUPERVISORS MEETING
1580 PAOLI PIKE
July 15, 2008 – 7:00pm**

Present: Chairman Marty Shane, Joe McDonough, Don McConathy and Thom Clapper. Vice-Chairman Carmen Battavio arrived at 8:30pm. Also present were Township Manager Rick Smith, Phyllis Marron (Park & Rec), Linda Gordon (Historical Commission), Jim McRee (Planning Commission & DMC), Al Zuccarello (DMC), Jane Fava (Conservancy Board) and Township Solicitor Jeff Sommer.

WORKSHOP

Deer Management Program

The Workshop was held in the large meeting room as a courtesy to the large number of residents who turned out to discuss the deer hunt. Marty announced that the deer would not be discussed until after the Comcast hearing, which would take place during the formal meeting, and that the deer discussion would have to be cut off at 10:30pm. He announced that any public comment for non-agenda items would be carried over until the next meeting.

Minutes

The draft minutes of June 24, July 1 and July 8 were reviewed and discussed. The Board decided to table the July 8 minutes.

Comcast, 1354 Boot Road – Conditional Use Application

Jeff Sommer informed the Board that no decision would be reached on the Comcast issue this evening, by mutual agreement of Comcast and the residents' attorney Mark Thompson.

Joe said a decision about landscaping for the antennae should be combined with the decision about the landscaping for the generators. Don disagreed and said one issue is a conditional use matter and the other is a building permit matter. Marty agreed. Jeff suggested that Joe put the issue before Comcast during the hearing.

Bills

Current invoices were reviewed.

Sorrell Hill Sign

The Board reviewed a rendering of the proposed sign for the Sorrell Hill development, and everyone was okay with it.

Pennoni Memo on EPA Final TMDL for Goose Creek (Chester Creek)

The Board reviewed this July 14 memo from Evan Andrews of Pennoni. Marty noted that the costs mentioned are in today's dollars, so when it comes time to upgrade the sewer system the cost will be more. Jane Fava then assured the Board that East Goshen will be okay, after which Joe said his angst from the previous week had subsided.

Status of DMC

Rick will draft a resolution to make the DMC an ABC. Jeff Sommer said he will review the draft and the Board should plan to take action at the September 2 meeting. The Board briefly discussed how many members the DMC should have -- seven or nine. Marty asked Jim McRee for input and Jim said he felt seven members was a good number.

Spreadsheet on Residents' Opinion of the Deer Management Program

Don suggested that Township staff attempt to look up the entries with missing addresses.

Bids for RCSTP Upgrade

Bids are due in by August 19. Rick said Evan Andrews will need a week to review them and make a recommendation. The Municipal Authority will then award the bid. Since some of the Supervisors will be on vacation in August, Marty suggested the Board schedule a special meeting before then to discuss this issue.

FORMAL MEETING

Call to Order & Pledge of Allegiance

Marty called the meeting to order at 8:06pm. He welcomed the large audience and introduced the members of the Board. He led everyone in the Pledge of Allegiance to the flag.

Announcements

Marty announced that the Board would proceed through the agenda as written, meaning the deer would probably not be discussed until 9:00pm, and the discussion would have to be stopped at 10:30pm. If necessary, the discussion would be continued to July 22 at 7:00pm. Marty also announced that due to time constraints, comments on non-agenda items would have to be carried over until July 22.

Marty stated that everyone had a right to speak but the meeting must be conducted in a respectful, orderly manner. He said if the meeting got out of control he would call a recess or would ask the person(s) out of control to leave. Residents would need to walk up to the microphone to be recognized. Before making their comments they would need to provide their name and address for the recording secretary.

Moment of Silence

Marty called for a moment of silence in honor of the men and women serving their country in the armed forces, and their families.

Recording of Meeting

Residents Abbas Rahbari of 1613 Manley Road and Leo Andrew Sinclair of 217 Lochwood Lane indicated that they would be recording the meeting. Mr. Rahbari announced that he reserved the right to "record and transmit" the proceedings.

Mr. Rahbari asked the Board if the Township planned to record the meeting. Marty said the Board would only be recording the public hearing, via a court reporter.

Later on in the meeting Marty asked a person with a television camera to please identify herself, and she stated she was filming for WPVI, Channel 6 Action News.

Approval of Minutes

Joe moved to approve the minutes of June 24 and July 1 as corrected in Workshop. Don seconded the motion. Marty announced that the minutes of July 8 would be tabled until a future meeting. Joe noted that the some information in the July 1 minutes was misstated, and for the record, the minutes should have said:

Page 5:

- Q. How close will hunting take place to residential areas?
- A. Hunting will be done at least 150 feet away from occupied structures.

- Q. Does that include sheds?
- A. That includes occupied structures.

Page 6:

- Q. What is the minimum required age for the hunters?
- A. Currently there is no age restriction in our program.

Don then noted that he misspoke about a matter in July 1 meeting and the minutes should have said:

Page 8:

He said this year he is trying to organize a hunt of his property and his neighbor's property in conjunction with the Willistown Conservation Trust.

Public Comment: Abbas Rahbari, 1613 Manley Road – Asked the Board the reason they do not record their meetings. Marty said that is a decision the Board has made. He said the recording secretary is very good and is usually able to take accurate minutes. Mr. Rahbari offered to donate a recording device to the Township along with one year of memory. Marty thanked him for the offer.

There was no further public comment. The Board voted unanimously to approve the June 24 and July 1 minutes as corrected.

Chairman's Report

Marty announced that the Board met in Executive Session on July 1 and July 8 to discuss a personnel matter.

PUBLIC HEARING

Comcast, 1354 Boot Road – Conditional Use Application

The Board conducted a public hearing to consider approval of the conditional use application of Comcast to install nine commercial communications antennae (satellite dishes) on their property

at 1354 Boot Road. Attorneys Lou Colagreco and Alyson Zarro were present for Comcast. Testimony was given by several witnesses. As some of the parties could not be present, no motion was made and the hearing was continued until July 22 at 8:00pm. A court reporter was present and will provide a complete transcript of the proceedings.

FORMAL MEETING (Resumed)

Treasurer's Report

The Treasurer's Report for July 15, 2008:

	RECEIPTS	EXPENDITURES
GENERAL FUND		
Real Estate Tax	\$ 0.00	
Earned Income Tax	\$ 8,776.15	
LST	\$ 0.00	Accounts Payable \$ 104,492.26
Transfer Tax	\$ 0.00	Debt Service \$ 0.00
Codes, Park & Rec, Etc.	\$ 334,662.99	Payroll \$ 50,000.00
Total Receipts	\$ 343,439.14	Total Expenditures \$ 154,492.26
Zoning Hearing Fund	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
State Fund	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Capital Reserve	\$ 0.00	\$ 10,133.12
Transportation Fund	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00
Sewer Operating	\$ 20,998.15	\$ 23,003.60
Refuse	\$ 23,335.28	\$ 78,240.28
Capital Projects	\$ 0.00	\$ 0.00

Joe moved to accept the Treasurer's Report as submitted, and the receipts, and to approve the expenditures reviewed in Workshop. Carmen seconded the motion. There was no discussion and no public comment. The Board voted and the motion passed unanimously.

Police Report

Marty introduced Sgt. Rick Gorman and announced there would be no police report this evening.

Sorrell Hill Sign

Joe moved to approve the sign for the Sorrell Hill development as depicted in a rendering viewed by the Board this evening. Carmen seconded the motion. There was no discussion or public comment. The Board voted unanimously to approve the motion.

Recess

There was a brief recess. The Chairman called the meeting back to order at 9:10pm.

Deer Management Program

Marty read a written response to the information contained in the unattributed flyer circulating in the Township. These remarks are attached to these minutes. He then read a quote from a CDC pamphlet about Lyme disease. An unidentified resident asked for the date of the pamphlet but no date could be located.

Marty also read information from a January 2008 Fact Sheet put out by the USDA regarding GonaCon™, a deer contraceptive. A copy of this Fact Sheet is attached to these minutes.

Resident Anne Quinn – Comments on Deer Management Program

Anne Quinn of 215 N. Lochwood Lane made the following statements:

- Hunting is not a viable option.
- Hunting is a dangerous sport.
- It's crazy to shoot deer around areas where children play.

She then requested the Board put a stop to the scheduled hunt. She stated she would rather run the risk of getting Lyme disease or hitting a deer with her car than have a hunt in East Goshen. It is a tradeoff she is willing to make.

Ms. Quinn then turned the microphone over to resident Ellen Sinclair of 217 Lochwood Lane.

Resident Ellen Sinclair – Comments on Deer Management Program

Ms. Sinclair thanked the Board for allowing her to come back a third year to voice her concerns and opposition to a deer hunt. She made the following statements and posed the following questions:

- The DMC is not composed of volunteers. The members are hand-picked by the Board. She asked why the first person to volunteer for the DMC was not selected to serve if the only requirement for service is being a resident of the Township.
- The open space is for the residents' use. Not all of the residents enjoy hunting.
- Eradicating deer will not eliminate Lyme disease or car accidents involving deer.
- While she was still on the DMC, another DMC member and she were asked to research the use of deer-resistant plants for landscaping, and to research deer crossing signs, etc. yet none of these items or suggestions made it into the DMC report. The Township is relying solely on hunting to address the deer problem.
- She is pleased to learn tonight that the Township is expanding the safety zone.
- A DMC member who is a hunter told her that her property is too small to hunt. Mr. Battavio was there to witness the statement.
- She requested that neighborhoods be permitted to opt out of the hunt.
- Why would the Board consider putting residents, especially children, in danger?
- She is considering moving from East Goshen because of the hunt. An attorney from the Pennsylvania Association of Realtors said it's not required for a seller to disclose hunting done near their property but it is recommended.

- She would like to see the results of the background checks performed on the hunters.
- How can residents distinguish legitimate hunters from poachers?
- Why is the onus on residents to police the hunters by calling 9-1-1 in case of a problem?
- She is opposed to the duration and extent of the hunt.
- Elected officials are supposed to protect the residents yet the Board of Supervisors is the one putting residents in harm's way by having this hunt.

Ms. Sinclair then turned the microphone over to Dr. Priscilla Ferrater-Mora.

Remarks by Dr. Priscilla Ferrater-Mora

Dr. Ferrater-Mora stated that PZP is authorized by the FDA. Marty asked her if she was challenging the information the Township has from the Department of Agriculture indicating otherwise and she said yes.

Dr. Ferrater-Mora thanked the Board for letting her speak. She said she is not a resident of East Goshen, but she has extensive credentials and taught at Penn State for 35 years.

She read a quote from a Pennsylvania Game Commission publication about “compensatory reproduction” and said that every male deer the Township kills will be a waste, because it is only effective to kill females. She then cited references from several publications to support her point. She said it would be possible to bait the deer and dart them with contraceptives. Dr. Ferrater-Mora said PZP is effective, stops conception, reduces herd size, is inexpensive, poses no danger to humans or the food chain, results in no psychological trauma to children, and causes no harm to the deer who are treated. She stated that a contraceptive program can be implemented very cheaply if volunteer labor is used. She said she had a \$10K check made out to the Township for use in starting such a program. She said she has been in contact with Dr. Jay Kirkpatrick of Billings, Montana, an expert on this topic, and he is willing to provide training to the volunteers. She suggested the \$10K could be used for airfare and other expenses while the volunteers are trained.

Dr. Ferrater-Mora said she only came to give the Board information on an alternative to hunting, and she is not trying to tell East Goshen what to do about the deer.

Presentation of Petition

Ellen Sinclair then presented the Board with a petition signed by 153 residents opposed to the deer hunt.

Comments from the Chairman

Marty stated that the Township’s Deer Management Program consists of four parts:

1. Hunting
2. Communication/Education

3. Lyme disease prevention (4-post feeders and tick tubes)
4. Prevention of deer/vehicle collisions

Marty said that if the Township had an opt-out option there wouldn't be enough open space to use for an effective hunting program. He said the Board voted to approve the Deer Management Program which includes a hunting element.

Remarks by Officer Scott Fredericks

Marty introduced Scott Fredericks, a Wildlife Conservation Officer for the Pennsylvania Game Commission. Officer Fredericks said he is a law enforcement agent, not a biologist or attorney. He stated that he came with no agenda. Officer Fredericks said there is nothing in Pennsylvania's current law that allows contraception to manage deer herds on a broad scale.

He said he covers 31 townships in Chester County and has been on the job for 14 years. In that time, the professional hunting groups he's dealt with have done a "superb" job of performing the task they have been charged with – thinning deer herds. He noted there is a big difference between professional hunters and recreational poachers, and that not every hunter resembles the stereotypical guy with a 6-pack and baggy pants. There are some very professional, conscientious hunters out there. He shared an anecdote of a professional hunter who alerted him to a poaching situation and as a result he was able to arrest the individual involved. Officer Fredericks stated that East Goshen's hunting program mirrors programs in other townships that have been successful, and in his opinion this is the "ideal way to go." Officer Fredericks then shared some statistics to demonstrate that hunting is a safe way to go.

Public Comment: Leo Andrew Sinclair, 207 Lochwood Lane – Asked Officer Fredericks if he is a hunter. Officer Fredericks said yes. Mr. Sinclair then asked Officer Fredericks his opinion of the famous Dick Cheney episode. Officer Fredericks stated that as he did not conduct the investigation of that incident, he could not comment.

Public Comment on Deer Management Program

Robert Corcoran, 1628 Eldridge Drive – Said his property abuts the open space in Bow Tree, and he has two young children he's concerned about. He asked if the police are responsible for monitoring the open space because when Bowtree residents have called them to complain about paint ball wars taking place there, the police said they couldn't do anything. He stated he is concerned hunters will go over the open space boundary lines and hunt on his property, endangering his family. He noted that five homeowners in Bow Tree paid a premium to be near the open space, including him. He said his attorney is looking into the matter for him. He said the rate of automobile accidents with deer is actually very low when viewed on a per capita basis. He posited that most of those accidents are actually due to driver carelessness and reckless driving, as was the case when he hit a deer.

Dan Callahan, 1681 Hunters Circle – Said there is a huge deer population on his property to the point that he is going to have to build a fence around the perimeter, which he knows will be an eyesore to the neighbors. It will also involve him having to apply for a variance, incur the extra expense, etc. He said he encounters a lot of deer on the roads and has been involved in collisions with deer. He said the deer population is only going to get worse, and it must be dealt with.

Abbas Rahbari, 1613 Manley Road – Said the Township acted “fraudulently” by hand-picking members of the DMC in order to get the recommendation they wanted. In doing so they “circumvented” the law and denied residents due process. However, the residents are not going to hand over their Township to outsiders coming in to kill deer.

Debbie Fetscher, 229 Cheshire Circle – Said if the Township was able to call her unlisted phone number to alert her that the July 4 fireworks show was rescheduled, surely they can let residents know that a hunt is going to take place. She stated that many neighbors, like her, are too busy with daily life to read the newsletters or go on the website, and as a result are unaware that a hunt is going to take place. The Township has done an inadequate job of communicating with residents. She also stated that there is open drug dealing going on in her neighborhood that everyone is aware of, yet when the police are called they won’t address the problem. Based on that, she does not trust that the police will respond appropriately if a resident calls them to report a hunter acting in an unsafe manner.

Elizabeth Anderson, 1607 Margo Lane – Thanked the Board for allowing her to speak on this topic for a third time. She cited a publication indicating that the Game Commission is allowing the use of PZP. She asked why the issue of a hunt was not put up for public vote. Marty answered that not every decision the Board has to make can go to a referendum; the process does not work that way. Ms. Anderson then noted that there is nothing about deer-resistant landscaping in the DMC report.

Shirley Lindsey, 918 Saratoga Drive – Said that four years ago her son was traumatized when a poacher killed a deer in her backyard. Marty stated that the approved hunting program should lead to a reduction in poaching.

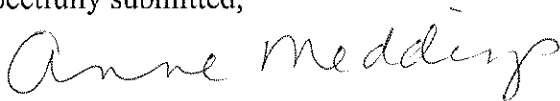
Closing Remarks

Marty announced that the deer discussion would be continued at the July 22 meeting from 7:00pm until 8:00pm. At 8:00pm there will be a break while a public hearing for Comcast is continued. After that, the deer discussion can be continued if there are still residents wishing to speak. Carmen suggested the Board schedule a special meeting just for the deer issue.

Adjournment

The meeting adjourned at 10:35pm.

Respectfully submitted,



Anne Meddings
Recording Secretary

Attachments (2)

Response to Flyer

We understand that there are some residents who are opposed to the Township's Deer Management Program for a variety of reasons. To those who are opposed to deer hunting using bow and arrows under any circumstances, I realize there is nothing I can say that will change your mind. To others, it is important that I address the misleading, inaccurate information that was contained in the flyer.

The simple fact is that we have too many deer for the amount of land and the number of residents we have in East Goshen. This is clearly evidenced by the number of deer/vehicle accidents, the number of Lyme disease cases, the damage to our woodlands, and the damage to resident's landscaping caused by deer.

Our responsibility as Supervisors is for the health, welfare and safety of the Township's residents. Once we recognized that we had a problem of too many deer, we had two choices; do nothing or do something. On April 1st, we approved the Township's Open Space Deer Management Program as recommended by the Township's Deer Management Committee. I want to thank the members of the DMC and, especially, Chairman Jim McRee, for their time and effort over the past 18 months.

It is not unusual for those who are opposed to bow hunting to suggest the use of contraception or sterilization as an alternative to bow hunting. In an effort to put this issue to bed once and for all, I want to quote from the Northeast Deer Technical Committee's April 2008 publication "An Evaluation Of Deer Management Options".

"As of February 2008, no fertility control agents have been federally approved for management of wildlife populations in the United States. Fertility control of deer is a rapidly advancing technology that continues to require additional research. Fertility control may have value for use on small insular deer populations under carefully regulated conditions, but will not provide an alternative to hunting for the control of free-ranging herds.

One hundred years of research and management experience throughout the United States and eastern Canada has shown regulated hunting to be an ecologically sound, socially beneficial, and fiscally responsible method of managing deer populations. Options routinely suggested as alternatives to regulated hunting are typically limited in applicability, prohibitively expensive, logistically impractical, or technically infeasible. As a consequence, wildlife professionals have come to recognize regulated hunting as the fundamental basis of successful deer management."

A similar position can be found in the Pennsylvania Game Commission's Deer Management Section publication dated February 2008 "A Guide to Deer Management in Developed Areas of Pennsylvania".

Finally, just last Saturday, we received information from the US Dept. of Agriculture's National Wildlife Research Center that states " their scientists anticipate that GonaCon, an immunocontraceptive vaccine, will be registered within one year by EPA as a Restricted Use product, probably for use by state or federal wildlife or natural resource management personnel or persons under their authority. GonaCon users will also need to follow state guidelines.

GonaCon will not replace other management tools and its use alone cannot rapidly reduce overabundant deer populations to healthy levels. Instead, they consider GonaCon a new tool that can be used in conjunction with other wildlife management methods, particularly in residential areas and suburban parks where traditional management methods, such as regulated hunting, are not always an option."

I will have the fact sheet dated January 2008 that we received from Wildlife Services attached to the minutes.

Now let's turn to the issue of safety. When the Supervisors asked the Deer Management Committee to develop a program, we made it clear that the paramount consideration was the safety of our residents. As I have stated in our Newsletter, if an issue arises that cannot be addressed to the satisfaction of the Board, the program will be terminated.

Regulated or recreational hunting as defined by the PA Game Commission is not permitted on Township-owned open space. The PA Game Commission refers to our program as controlled hunting, which allows the Township to impose regulations greater than those required for recreational hunting. I encourage everyone to go to either one of the Township's websites, deer@eastgoshen.org or egtadm@eastgoshen.org, to read our entire program. I am confident that you will feel confident in the safety of our program.

I would like to highlight some of the safety features of our program:

- We are using deer management organizations rather than recreational hunters for our program. These organizations are focused on assisting communities or property owners with controlled hunting programs for managing deer populations.
- These organizations have stringent requirements for memberships, check the backgrounds of their members, carry insurance to indemnify the Township, and train, educate and certify their members in bow hunting.
- No member participating in our program of any of these organizations has had any violations regarding the PA Game Commissions laws and regulations.
- The respective deer management organizations are responsible that their hunters abide by the Pa Game Commission regulations and Township requirements and report any violations to the appropriate agencies.

- Hunters are not permitted to harvest a deer if a non-hunter is within 50 yards of the targeted deer.
- While there will be 70 hunters participating in our program, we anticipate that a maximum of 15 hunters will be hunting at any one time. The availability of hunters and the weather will determine when hunting will take place.
- A weekly schedule of when and where hunting will be taking place will be posted on our website for residents to see.
- The PA Game Commission establishes a 150' safety zone from any occupied building. We have incorporated an additional requirement that the safety zone must be no less than 50' from the property line. In addition, the Township will approve the location of all tree stands.
- The PA Game Commission's records show that there have been only one injury and no fatalities associated with bow hunting since 1999.

Now I will address a few other issues that were raised in the flyer:

- Hershey's Mill is not included in our program since it is privately-owned land.
- The Township's-owned open space will be appropriately marked.
- The presence of approved hunters should decrease, not increase poaching.
- Deer hit in the heart or lungs typically die between 25 and 100 yards from where they were hit. Deer hit in other vital organs generally run a short distance and lie down, if not pursued. Wounded deer typically seek heavy cover near water. PA Game regulations require hunted deer to be recovered, regardless of where the deer is located. If the deer is on private property, permission must be granted by the property owner before the deer is removed.
- The increase in deer/vehicle collisions during the hunting season is attributed to a number of factors with hunting only playing a minor role.
- Studies have shown that the incidence of Lyme disease decreases as the deer population decreases. It is rare that the opposite occurs.
- Our Solicitor has stated that hunting on an adjacent property does not need to be disclosed to a potential buyer.
- Hunting has occurred on some private property, but the opportunities are limited. The population of deer in East Goshen has doubled over the past 10 years and will continue to increase without the implementation of our Deer Management

Program. This is why our goal is to harvest between 35-40 deer per year, which will reduce our deer population to approx. 150 over a ten year period. This results in a ratio of 15 deer per square mile, which is appropriate for our Township. An on-going program will be necessary to harvest 12-15 deer per year to maintain this ratio.

- We have seen no studies indicating that there is psychological trauma to anyone as a result of bow hunting.

Finally, let me say that the Supervisors recognize that the Township has too many deer which affects the health, welfare and safety of our residents and that controlled hunting using bow and arrows is the only viable option at this time to reduce the size of our deer herd. More importantly, we feel that we have done everything possible to make this program as safe as possible for our residents.

Now I would like to move the next agenda item. Anne Quinn has asked to be placed on the agenda to address the Board regarding the Deer Management Program.

GonaCon™—Birth Control for Deer: Questions and Answers

Q. What is GonaCon™?

A. GonaCon™ is a new gonadotropin-releasing hormone (GnRH) immunocontraceptive vaccine developed by scientists at the U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Wildlife Services' (WS) National Wildlife Research Center (NWRC). Presently, applications of GnRH are being researched in controlled field studies for potential use as a wildlife management tool.

Q. How does GonaCon™ work?

A. The single-shot, multiyear vaccine stimulates the production of antibodies that bind to GnRH, a hormone in an animal's body that signals the production of sex hormones (e.g., estrogen, progesterone, and testosterone). By binding to GnRH, the antibodies reduce GnRH's ability to stimulate the release of these sex hormones. All sexual activity is decreased, and animals remain in a nonreproductive state as long as a sufficient level of antibody activity is present.

Q. How does GonaCon™ stimulate the production of antibodies?

A. GonaCon™ causes an animal's body to make antibodies against its own GnRH. To do this, WS scientists synthesize and hook GnRH to a foreign protein. This material looks like a large, new molecule that the animal's immune system has never encountered. As a result, when it is injected into the animal's body, the body's immune response neutralizes the hormone's function, resulting in infertility.

Q. What are the health effects associated with GonaCon™?

A. The health effects associated with GonaCon™ are minimal. Vaccinated animals showed a decrease in sexual activity and breeding behavior. In field and pen studies, animals showed little to no visual evidence of inflammation at injection sites, and blood chemistry was similar among treatment and control groups. However, in some necropsied animals, granulomas were present at injection sites. Development of granulomas is a common side effect in vaccines with adjuvants, which are compounds used in many human and livestock vaccines to enhance a vaccine's effectiveness.

Q. Are there any dangers or secondary hazards to humans or other animals that eat meat from vaccinated deer?

A. There is no known danger associated to humans or wildlife from eating deer that have been vaccinated with GonaCon™. In 2005, the U.S. Food and Drug Administration (FDA) informed APHIS that white-tailed deer vaccinated with GonaCon™ do not raise a human food safety concern. As with other vaccines, such as those used with livestock, both the vaccine and the antibodies produced are proteins. Once ingested, they are broken down by stomach acids and enzymes. In 2003, the FDA approved the slaughter of experimentally vaccinated pigs with GonaCon™. Similar injectable hormone-altering products are used routinely in livestock applications.

Q. How long does GonaCon™ last?

A. It depends upon the individual animal and its response to the vaccine. Long-term field efficacy data currently does not exist. However, in pen studies, a single-shot of GonaCon™ has successfully kept 4 out of 5 female deer infertile for 5 years. A second shot given the same year or in subsequent years can significantly increase effectiveness, potentially rendering deer infertile for life.

Q. Can GonaCon™ be used with other wildlife species?

A. In addition to white-tailed deer, GonaCon™ has proven effective for use with other wildlife species, including California ground squirrels, Norway rats, feral cats and dogs, domestic and feral swine, wild horses, and elk. Since registering the contraceptive is time consuming and costly, WS has decided to focus registration efforts on use for female white-tailed deer. Future research will likely be directed toward registering GonaCon™ for use with other wildlife species.

Q. What are the benefits of GonaCon™?

A. Because it is a single-shot, multiyear vaccine, GonaCon™ may be a practical management tool. Deer may need to be injected only once to become infertile for up to 5 years. A boost injection could increase effectiveness to almost 100 percent and increase longevity of the contraceptive effect. The vaccine can be used in urban and residential areas, where other management methods, such as hunting, are not an option.

Q. What are the limitations of GonaCon™?

A. GonaCon™ must be injected into the muscle or

issue of each animal. Eventually, WS scientists hope to produce an oral GnRH vaccine bait that will be attractive to deer but not other animals.

Q. How much does GonaCon™ cost?

A. The vaccine itself only costs \$2-\$10 per dose. The main cost of using GonaCon™ is associated with the time and money required to capture and vaccinate the deer. This cost can be several hundred dollars per deer depending upon many factors, such as how many deer need to be captured and whether the deer are easy or difficult to catch.

Q. How does GonaCon™ differ from porcine zona pellucida (PZP)?

A. PZP, another immunocontraceptive vaccine, has been used to sterilize dogs, coyotes, burros, wild horses, and white-tailed deer temporarily. The PZP vaccine, also known as SpayVac™, causes multiple estrus cycles in female deer. GonaCon™, however, prevents female deer from entering estrus.

Q. Is GonaCon™ currently available to Federal, State, and local wildlife management agencies?

A. No. Once registered, GonaCon™ will be under the authority of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). The GonaCon™ studies underway in Maryland, New Jersey, and Pennsylvania are being conducted as part of EPA's approval process. NWRC hopes to submit a registration application to EPA in early 2008 and anticipates a product registration approximately 18 months after submittal. NWRC is currently seeking a private-sector partner to take the vaccine to market.

Q. Who will be allowed to use GonaCon™?

A. GonaCon™ will be registered as a "Restricted Use" product. Although final label language has not been negotiated with EPA, NWRC anticipates the product will be labeled for use by USDA APHIS Wildlife Services or State wildlife management personnel or persons working under their authority. GonaCon™ users will need to follow State authorization processes.

Q. Will GonaCon™ eliminate the need for hunting to control deer overpopulation?

A. No. Contraception alone cannot reduce overabundant deer populations to healthy levels. GonaCon™ is a tool to be used in conjunction with other wildlife management methods.

Q. What studies are currently being done with GonaCon™?

A. A field study near Silver Spring, MD, provided additional data on the efficacy of the vaccine on white-tailed deer. At a fenced military facility, 28 adult does were

captured in the summer of 2004, equipped with ear tags and radiotelemetry transmitters, and injected with GonaCon™. The reproductive behavior and reaction of these does were monitored for 2 years and compared with those of 15 unvaccinated adult does that inhabit an adjacent, enclosed parcel of similar habitat. Data show the vaccine to be 88 percent effective the first year and 47 percent effective the second year in treated deer.

In July 2005, a similar field study involving another 28 deer was started in Morris County, NJ, that showed 67 percent effectiveness the first year and 48 percent effectiveness the second year. Results from these studies will be submitted to the EPA during the registration process for GonaCon™.

WS scientists collaborated with Pennsylvania State University to conduct studies required by EPA on the toxicity and safety of GonaCon™ in captive deer. Responses of treated and control groups of deer were compared via blood and tissue analyses. Data showed no differences between treatment and control groups.

Q. What does WS hope to accomplish with these studies?

A. Data from field and pen studies will aid in the final EPA process for approving GonaCon™ as a contraceptive for use in wildlife and feral animals.

Q. What other agencies or organizations are involved in these studies?

A. USDA's WS is working with the following agencies and organizations to develop and test GonaCon™:

- Pennsylvania State University
- U.S. General Services Administration
- U.S. Department of Defense
- USDA's Veterinary Services

Q. What is the NWRC mission?

A. The NWRC is the research arm of USDA's WS program, a nonregulatory program that provides Federal leadership in managing conflicts with wildlife. NWRC applies scientific expertise to the development of practical methods to resolve human-wildlife conflicts and maintain the quality of the environments shared with wildlife.

Q. How do I obtain more information on this subject?

A. For more information on GonaCon™ and WS' National Wildlife Research Center, please go to http://www.aphis.usda.gov/wildlife_damage/nwrc/ on the Web.

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