

Economic Impact of Whitetail Deer Farming in Oklahoma

Currently in Oklahoma there are over 200 farms raising whitetail deer. Many more raise other species of Cervidae such as Elk, Fallow deer, Red deer and African hoof-stock. While some may choose this alternative agriculture endeavor as a hobby or sideline, the majority of Whitetail deer breeders raise deer as a viable business. It is estimated that the Whitetail deer breeding industry brings in over 200 million annually to the Oklahoma economy. As an alternative agriculture business, whitetail deer farming offers those with small farms or property unsuitable for other agriculture or livestock a means to live and make a living in rural Oklahoma.

Deer farming has been around for thousands of years. Currently venison is the 2nd leading export of New Zealand. While in specific, whitetail deer are not marketed commercially for their venison, they are highly sought after as game animals in the wild as well as on privately owned high-fenced ranches. Being the equivalent of building and stocking a farm pond with commercially raised fish, stocking select, genetically superior whitetail deer into privately owned high-fence ranches is becoming more prevalent not only in Oklahoma but throughout the country. Therein lies the market for farm-raised Whitetail deer. As more and more such high-fence ranches are constructed so grows the need for the product.

In 2001 a group of Whitetail deer breeders got together to form the Whitetails of Oklahoma Association. Our Oklahoma deer breeders are highly respected among others in the industry on a national level as being proactive in addressing issues of concern.

A survey of members was conducted to try to get accurate figures on the economic impact of Whitetail deer farming to our state, resulting in the following figures:

These figures do not include hunting facilities or land, lodge and housing expenses but reflects many of the expenses accrued on these properties, such as feed and purchase of animals. It would be a safe estimate to place the value of property purchased and fenced for commercial hunting and breeding operations in Oklahoma to range in value to over a billion dollars!!!

"Whitetails of Oklahoma"

Survey of expenses incurred by Whitetail Breeders

Feed.....	\$5,625,000.00
Vet.....	\$225,868.15

Skip West
Handout

Truck/Transportation.....	\$1,578,230.00
Trailer purchases.....	\$750,430.00
Insurance on equipment/stock.....	\$1,250,959.34
Local Taxes.....	\$1,335,356.55
Implements.....	\$897,952.54
Barn/Fence.....	\$3,350,160.12
Advertising.....	\$329,436.54
Fertilizer/Seed.....	\$1,187,363.10
Labor.....	\$2,627,307.00
Utilities.....	\$2,209,171.40
Breeding & medicines.....	\$630,400.00
Telephone.....	\$711,353.76
Miscellaneous.....	\$5,310,914.56
Mileage driven.....	\$1,654,480.88
Animals purchased for breeding stock.....	\$10,005,750.00

Total 2010 expenses of whitetail deer farmers..... \$39,674,383.90 with a multiplier of only 6 that is over 238 million dollars!!

Whether it is the local schools, feed supplier, the local vet, the local contractors or the local real estate agent, many are affected in a positive way through the efforts of the Whitetail deer farmer here in the state of Oklahoma.

Oklahoma's elected and appointed officials should be proud of the results of their interest and help in making Oklahoma a destination and envy for Cervidae Breeders, Hunting Ranch Owners and Hunters from across the nation. That was our goal and thanks to the co-operative effort of all parties involved we have been a great success story with growth during the current economic conditions and a huge influx of non-resident money coming to the "Greatest State in the Nation"!!!