



Vension Donation Coalition (VDC) Hits Half Million Milestone

April 27, 2007– For the last 6 years DEC's Division of Fish Wildlife and Marine Resources has partnered with Second Harvest Food Banks, NRCS, Resource Conservation Development Councils (RC&D'S), NY Farm Bureau, Sportsman Organizations and many, many volunteers to distribute 2 million servings of venison to those in need.

The 2006 total venison donated neared the 85,000 lb. Mark, increasing slightly over 2005 as did the deer harvest. Organizers are optimistic that this trend will continue as the deer herd rebounds from a recent decline in population.

DECALs also plays an important role where license agents collect \$1.00 donations from sportsmen and women to support the program. Nearly \$50,000 has been collected in the first two years of the Feed four With a Buck campaign. Wildlife staff coordinate the program in 52 counties at 120 processors throughout New York. This effort enables deer hunters to drop off deer at participating processors for donation. The venison burger is processed, frozen and picked up by the Food Banks for distribution to local pantries and soup kitchens. The VDC finalizes the effort with payment to the processor, making it a cost free for sportsmen and women to wisely use the deer resource to help those in need. This year's 85,000 lbs was gone by February!

As this great program gains momentum due to its win-win appeal, the Venison Donation Coalition is eager to kick off its next five years of effort this fall with gathering 100,000 in 2007. Long term goals could realize 200,000 lbs annually when 2% of the deer harvest is shared with those in need.