



Texas Tech announces grant to Deer Breeder's Corp By Conor Harrison on January 9, 2014 in Texas Hunting

Researchers at The Institute of Environmental and Human Health at Texas Tech University recently received a start-up grant from the Deer Breeders Corp. to look for drug residues and study insect-borne disease transmission dynamics in white-tailed deer.

The goal of the partnership between Texas Tech and Deer Breeders Corp. is to strengthen and promote an emerging and growing sector of the agricultural industry.

The Texas Tech University System Office of Corporate Engagement is hosting Chris Timmons, president of the Deer Breeders Corp., and members of his board in Lubbock Dec. 13 to discuss the ongoing research project and opportunities to develop a white-tailed deer research program at Texas Tech, with the vision to construct a dedicated research facility in the Lubbock area.

"Our office wants Texas Tech to be the research university of choice for the Deer Breeders Corporation and white-tailed deer industry," said Russell Thomasson, associate vice chancellor of corporate engagement.

This grant is expected to mark the start of a long-term research partnership between the two entities. The grant went to TIEHH associate professors Ernest Smith, Steven Presley and senior research associate Galen Austin.

"Deer breeding and farming is a big industry," Thomasson said. "Significant dollars are invested by breeders and ranchers to meet the demand of private and commercial hunting operations. Currently, deer breeders have no antibiotics or other pharmaceuticals labeled for use in these animals, and so they use medicines developed for cattle and other animals. We hope to find healthy solutions for the deer industry."

Timmons, a Texas Tech alumnus and president of Deer Breeders Corp., said that deer breeding is an \$8 billion industry in the United States. Part of the problem producers face is that veterinary medications used on their animals are labeled for use in livestock, not white-tailed deer.

"We keep having the same questions crop up in our industry, such as how long do these medications stay in the deer's system," Timmons said. "No one is doing any research on it."

"Right now, there are very few vaccines or antibiotics labeled for use in deer," Timmons added. "Knowing the lifespan and effectiveness of these medications in white-tailed deer helps us, as producers, continue to offer a healthy product for the market. Finding these answers will be a real breakthrough for the deer industry. The beneficiaries of these studies not only will be the deer breeders but the ranchers who are managing their native herds for profit, which results in a better product for the hunter. Who better to do it than Texas Tech?"

For this initial study, Texas Tech will receive blood samples from deer bred in captivity. Texas Tech will develop testing procedures to detect pharmaceuticals to see how long it takes for the deer's body to eliminate them.

Thomasson said deer breeders have significant capital invested and need to use pharmaceuticals for the humane treatment and protection of their deer herd.

"By conducting the drug residue research, Texas Tech hopes to provide deer breeders with the information they need to ensure that their deer herds are healthy and profitable," Thomasson said.