



State Issues Fact Sheet

SUNDAY HUNTING

The Issue:

In the 2011 General Assembly session, legislation allowing hunting on Sunday **failed by a wider margin than ever** even though it was supported by national associations and companies like the National Rifle Association, Cabelas Sporting Goods and others.

On June 7, 2011, the Board of Game and Inland Fisheries adopted a resolution urging the repeal of the prohibition of hunting on Sunday. Part of the rationale for taking this position was based on official and unofficial hunter surveys. One flaw with these surveys is that they fail to recognize or solicit input from landowners and other recreational users regarding their opinion of this change in the law.

In July 2011, eight other states as well as state and national groups and individual supporters of allowing Sunday hunting in Virginia have actively utilized websites, social media and online videos to advance their cause. In some cases, information posted online might have led some to think Virginia Farm Bureau has altered its position on Sunday hunting.

Farm Bureau Policy:

Virginia Farm Bureau, through our grassroots policy process, holds a longstanding position: **"We oppose hunting on Sunday."** Representatives of a vast majority of our farmer members have annually discussed and voted for such a position since 1993. In the discussions, our members cite faith-based beliefs, as well as the ability of horse owners and riders and landowners to use the outdoors one day a week without worry from hunters.

Frequently Asked Questions / Farm Bureau's Response:

Will allowing hunting on Sunday increase the number of hunters?

There is no definitive evidence that indicates allowing hunting on Sunday will increase the number of hunters. The same number of hunters will simply adjust their schedules to hunt when the conditions are suitable to their individual desires.

Shouldn't Virginia follow other states by allowing hunting on Sunday?

Other states allow a variety of methods and practices for hunting that are not allowed in Virginia (e.g. baiting and others). There is no reason to conform our laws to other states and no reason to turn away from traditions like family, farming and the use of the outdoors by all citizens in favor of an expanded opportunity for a few.

Will allowing hunting on Sunday affect the number of wildlife?

Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries staff have stated that hunting on Sunday will not impact the population of wildlife, which also means **there will be no significant relief of crop damage from wildlife by hunting on Sunday.**

Game department staff consistently cite that there is no biological reason not to hunt on Sunday because wildlife has no concept to the day of week; however, wildlife learn habits of hunters and avoid them by feeding at night and other times.

Will allowing hunting on Sunday increase tourism or economic activity?

It is impossible to judge whether hunting on Sunday will lead to more tourism and economic activity; most traveling hunters are willing and have the means to take time off from work to do so.

Will this encourage more youth to start hunting?

We question the assertion that there will be an increase in youth hunting as a result of Sunday hunting. With ever-increasing demands on young people's time for various activities (school, sports, religious, etc.), allowing hunting on Sundays is not likely to increase the number of younger hunters. Currently, the core of the hunting season is dictated by school holidays in November and December and, therefore, allowing hunting on Sundays will not lead to a significant increase in youth hunting.