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Submission on Deer Management Policy Vision,
Forest Service,
Department of Agriculture, Food and the Marine,
Johnstown Castle Estate,
Wexford.

Dear Sir / Madame,

I am a professional deer stalker and deer manager operating a deer stalking business in County Wicklow. I have been involved in this business for 23 years which mainly centers around offering deer stalking trips to overseas clients from Denmark and Norway in addition to undertaking contract deer culling and other deer management services to landowners. As a principle tourism based business which brought in over four hundred bed nights to the local Glenmalure\Laragh area this Autumn and Winter of 2011, I feel I am contributing positively to the Irish Economy, and by implementing strict, balanced cull programs I am greatly enhancing the quality of the deer on lands I manage, while maintaining them at levels which minimize damage to crops.

The absence of an form of coordinated approach and the indiscriminate, uncontrolled shooting of deer (legal and illegal), particularly males, greatly threatens my business and the contribution it makes to the economy of rural areas at a time period when tourism is at its lowest

In recent years there has been a considerable increase in the number of other operators offering tourist stalking opportunities. I have no problem with the competition, however I feel this sector needs regulation in order to prevent customers being ripped off by “fly by night” operators, and I would fully support an initiative in this regard.

I am in full agreement with the development of a National Policy for deer management which I believe if managed are a considerable National asset and resource. Unfortunately most of the media articles which appear tend to be biased towards the negative impacts of deer rather than the positive aspects.

I wish to confirm my interest in participating in any future Policy Development Partnership. I feel it is essential to have professional deer interests such as mine represented on such a panel. I strongly feel that my knowledge and experience in this area would contribute positively to this initiative. I look forward to your reply,

Yours faithfully

John Fenton.
