

# BAITING: Thanks to lawmakers, the practice is legal, but hunters should remember that license is required

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addition, the food must be out of sight because of natural vegetation or a terrain feature, such as behind a hill.

"The debate has been raging for years among hunters, wildlife biologists and politicians alike," Sykes said. "Hunting by the aid of bait has been one of the most contentious topics of each legislative session for the past several years. In my opinion as a biologist, baiting was not a biological issue in Alabama. It was, however, a personal hunting dilemma where the individual had to decide on whether hunting over bait constituted fair chase or was ethical. The choice to hunt over bait is a personal one that every hunter will have to make. Personally, I'll buy the license for nothing more than peace of mind for me. It's nothing more than a really inexpensive insurance policy. Then, I can hunt with anyone and not have to worry if they have feed out."

Alabama hunters don't need to

wait for deer season to begin hunting over bait. People can shoot feral hogs on private land all year long without limit. On most public hunting lands, people can shoot unlimited feral hogs as bonus animals when hunting other legal game with weapons and ammunition legal for those species, but check before hunting any specific properties. People can even obtain a permit from the nearest Alabama Department of Conservation and Natural Resources district office to hunt porkers at night.

Pigs can live almost anywhere, but prefer bottomland forests, creek drainages, swamps and agricultural fields. Wild hogs eat almost anything including acorns, grasses, forbs, roots, berries, bulbs, mushrooms, insects, snails, grubs, earthworms and small animals, alive or dead. When looking for morsels, hogs often root up dirt with their noses. Some areas almost look like a roto-tiller plowed it up.

Since hogs can cause major damage to crops, pasturelands and whitetail habitat, many landowners welcome, even encourage, sportsmen to shoot all the pigs they can on their properties. Some people stalk hogs. Others chase and catch pigs with specially trained dogs, but most people hunt them from stands just like for deer. With the new baiting law in place, properly licensed sportsmen can set up feeders, climb into their stands and shoot all the pigs they see.

When planning to hunt on private land, first obtain permission. Also, sportsmen who obtain permission to hunt on a piece of private property they do not own should also seek the landowner's permission before setting up a feeder or spreading bait on the property.

For more on the laws regarding baiting for deer and hogs in Alabama, see [www.outdooralabama.com/node/2603](http://www.outdooralabama.com/node/2603).



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