



# '13 Inch' Rule

The so-called "13-inch rule" means that (in counties where it applies) hunters can take only one buck per county with antlers measuring 13 inches or more on the inside spread. They can also take one buck with at least one unbranched antler per county. The state bag limit is five deer total.

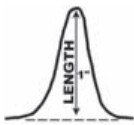
This gives more bucks an opportunity to mature into larger animals. "We're trying to get a better age class on the herd," said Mills County Game Warden Vance Flowers. A healthier herd should give hunters "a better opportunity to harvest a larger deer."

However, Flowers acknowledged that it can be difficult to accurately determine antler spread, especially in low light conditions or from a distance. But when in doubt, let it walk, they say.

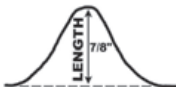
A healthier herd equals better hunting in the future, Flowers said, and "the only way we're going to get there is if we let (the smaller bucks) walk."

**DEER (READ VERY CAREFULLY)**

- A "buck deer" is a deer with a **hardened antler protruding through the skin**. A "spike buck deer" is a **BUCK** with no antler having more than one point. **ALL OTHER DEER ARE ANTLERLESS DEER**. A spike buck must be tagged with a buck deer tag from the hunter's hunting license or applicable permit.
- White-tailed Deer** - Except for deer taken under MLD permits, no person may take more than five white-tailed deer or more than three bucks (all seasons combined) in one license year. Bag limits in individual counties may be less (see County Listings).
- Mule Deer** - The annual bag limit is two mule deer with no more than one being a buck (all seasons combined). See County Listings for antlerless permit requirements.
- SPECIAL ANTLER RESTRICTIONS:**
  - Antler restrictions apply only in certain counties (see County Listings, pgs. 80-103). In these counties, the bag limit is **two legal bucks, but only ONE** may have an inside spread of 13 inches or greater. In these counties, a **legal buck deer** is defined as having:
    - a hardened antler protruding through the skin **AND**;
    - at least one unbranched antler; **OR**
    - an inside spread measurement between main beams of 13 inches or greater (does not apply to a buck that has an unbranched antler).
  - IT IS UNLAWFUL TO TAKE MORE THAN ONE BUCK WITH AN INSIDE SPREAD OF 13 INCHES OR GREATER IN A COUNTY WHERE ANTLER RESTRICTIONS ARE IN EFFECT.**
  - To determine if a buck has an inside spread measurement of at least 13 inches, look at the distance from ear-tip to ear-tip on a buck with ears in the alert position (see illustration, pg. 69). The 13-inch or greater inside spread requirement does not apply to any buck that has an unbranched antler.
  - Does not apply on Level 2 or 3 MLDP properties.
- Definition of a point:** A point is a projection that extends at least one inch from the edge of a main beam or another tine. The tip of the main beam is also a point.

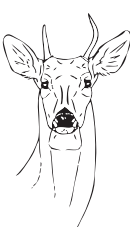
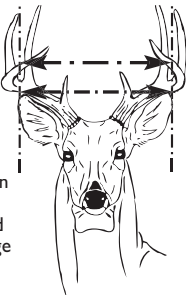


**Legal Point**



**Not a Point**

Ears in alert position are approximately 13 inches apart and may be used to judge the inside spread.



**LEGAL**  
at least one  
unbranched antler



**LEGAL**  
at least one  
unbranched antler



**LEGAL**  
inside spread of  
13 inches or greater



**ILLEGAL**  
This buck meets  
none of the criteria



# Venison Donation Program Fills Pantries

**By Steven Bridges**

The Ministerial Association and Mills County, Texas Game Warden Richard Whitt have a program where hunters can donate unwanted venison to the area's needy families.

The Ministerial Association still needs the support of local hunters, churches, businesses and individuals to make the program a success.

Hunters willing to make a donation to have the deer processed are much appreciated. Hunters that simply want to drop off their field-dressed deer, however, are also welcome to participate.

In cases where the hunters do not pay for the processing, the Ministerial Association will cover the cost, which has been reduced for this project by the deer processing plant on Hwy 84 near the FM 2005 turnoff.

The Ministerial Association is also asking local families willing to take a whole, field-dressed deer they can process themselves to contact Pastor Stewart Farrell at 325-938-6018 so he can procure a list of persons that hunters can take the animals to directly.

The processed deer meat is collected by the Ministerial Association, and distributed — either directly to the families or individuals, or through the Goldthwaite Evangelism Center's Food Pantry in Goldthwaite.

The Ministerial Association is appreciative of all the hunters who donate venison, and would like more hunters to donate venison this season. We can help the habitat by harvesting the extra deer, and help feed our neighbors by donating protein rich venison.

Anyone who would like to help by donating meat, funds for processing, or even freezer storage space is asked to contact Pastor Farrell at 325-938-6018 or Richard Whitt via the Sheriff's Office, 325-648-2245.

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