

RE: Deer Management in Carlisle, MA

From: Rutberg, Allen T (allen.rutberg@tufts.edu)

To: [REDACTED]

Cc: [REDACTED]

Date: Friday, May 29, 2020, 09:34 AM EDT

Dear Mr. DeKock,

I appreciate your contacting me about the possibility of conducting what might be a mutually beneficial deer contraception study in Carlise. Unfortunately, we're not looking for another field site at this time and at least in the short term, it's not realistic to consider deer contraception as a tool for limiting deer impacts on the Town.

Here's where we are now:

Our research has shown that the contraceptive vaccine we've been working with, an enhanced preparation of the PZP (porcine zona pellucida) vaccine, yields two to three years of contraception with a single initial shot, and at least 2-3 more years with a single booster delivered a few years later. (You will often read that PZP requires annual boosters to maintain effectiveness; this requirement applies to an older version of the vaccine.) We have also shown at several suburban sites that we can substantially reduce deer populations using PZP. In all these sites, the deer are at least somewhat accustomed to people, so either using bait or darting from a vehicle, we can (with some effort and ingenuity) get to within about 20 yards of a majority of the females in the herd.

Our field work now focuses on how to make delivery of the vaccine cheaper and easier. We're currently working on that project in two suburban communities in New York, where deer densities are significantly higher than they are in most of eastern and central Massachusetts.

The real challenge now is less scientific than political and regulatory. No state has any rules or regulations that would permit communities to apply contraception to their deer populations outside the context of a scientific research permit. That will have to change, so that communities can set up such programs on their own. Wildlife contraceptives are also (weirdly) regulated as pesticides, and both EPA and state-level registrations have to be obtained for PZP. (My colleagues at The Humane Society of the United States are working on that.) Those registrations will also set conditions on use, including required training of applicators.

It is now my goal to help create the conditions that will allow towns like Carlisle to use contraception to address their deer population challenges. In the meantime, I'm happy to help any way I can.

Regards,

Allen

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From: Jonathan DeKock <[REDACTED]>
Sent: Friday, May 22, 2020 10:47 AM
To: Rutberg, Allen T <Allen.Rutberg@tufts.edu>
Subject: Deer Management in Carlisle, MA

Dear Dr. Rutberg,

I am the Chair of the Carlisle Massachusetts Deer Control Committee. Our goal is to reduce the deer overpopulation in town, primarily to mitigate impacts of overbrowse on our conserved forest lands. Although it has not in the past, this could include more than just managed hunting programs. I understand from the talk you gave for the Town late last year that contraception is not currently allowed except under a research permit. As you are the only person I am aware of doing research of this nature, I would be interested in exploring the possibility of such a research operation in the Town with you. If you would be interested in pursuing this, please let me know. I look forward to possibly establishing a mutually beneficial relationship to help curb deer populations and further your research efforts.

Thank you for your consideration,

Jonathan DeKock
Chair, Carlisle Deer Control Committee