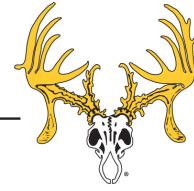




## TTHA FIELD PRO STAFF NOTEBOOK

- 1. Hunting conditions in the field: this has been one of the most challenging years in many! 2009 has had 3 blue moon months, including October, which has completely complicated rutting activity nationwide. The result has been a “trickle” rut in most areas. Instead of massive numbers of does coming into estrus, there is a doe here and there. The result has been major stress on bucks, indicated by lower body fat indices. In the Midwest, corn and beans were not harvested due to heavy rains which have made the situation even worse there. All of the TV program staff members are reporting major difficulty getting bucks killed on tape. I anticipate a lot of shows with Texas content next season, since many are coming to Texas to take advantage of the “management advantage.”**
- 2. Hunting Tips: This year, I have had great success with decoys, particularly in areas with lower buck densities. I arrange the decoy so it looks either to my right or left, so the buck will try to come around between me and my brush blind. The distance you place it depends on the type of weapon you are using. I put it at 30 yards for bow and 70 yards for gun.**
- 3. Any new gear that caught your eye and why: I really like the Ozonics units and we have given them rigorous scientific testing in replicated studies. Although skeptical at first, they turned out to really work. Also, we are really enjoying and using all the Nikon products, especially the scopes and rangefinders.**
- 4. Stories from the field: Probably the strangest thing I have seen this season is a number of instances of sexual advances by bucks toward other bucks! These all have been in areas with high buck populations, and I have seen this before. I believe the reason is to intimidate or dominate the younger buck being pursued. This is used by Pronghorn for that purpose. Further, I have some trail**



**camera photos of bucks using scrapes I treated with human urine. Pretty weird stuff, but very interesting!**

**I had two wonderful hunts with my daughter, Sydney, her husband Damon and my wife Susie. They all have killed great bucks, and it is increasingly more fun to help someone else take a great buck than me! One of my North American Whitetail Hunts was fun, in that the conditions were terrible, but we stuck to our strategy. A big mature buck came to the edge of a Buck Forage Oat plot, saw now does and trotted off. A few grunts from a call, and he quickly returned. We had him on tape and a made a good shot. Lesson learned? There were two. First, never give up. Second, you have to have the right equipment, and know when and how to use it. Most guys would have watched the buck leave and chalked it up to a lost opportunity.**

- 5. Trends, news or legislation: We continue to see the impacts of EHD and Bluetongue on deer herds around the country. I feel we lost about 3 million deer in the last 3 years to these diseases, yet professionals still persist in focusing on CWD. Wisconsin has pulled the plug on their eradication program, since the deer herds actually have increased in the zones where they wanted to reduce the herds. So much for CWD leading to extinction!**

**Commercial operators are reporting increasing bookings as folks deal with poor economic conditions. It seems folks want to hunt, even when they can't afford it. Demand appears to be primarily for high-end bucks. "Management" bucks are not in high demand.**