

Some speculate glyphosate leading to deer population decline as corn fields get less weedy

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion and analysis.

Whitetails have thrived in the presence of industrial grain production for decades, but some biologists and deer managers are suggesting that the newest farming practices aren't universally good for deer. Large-scale farms are now so efficient that there's little forage for wildlife once the crops are harvested, and farmers have become very good at killing weeds, plants that wildlife biologists identify as habitat for everything from songbirds to whitetails.

Hunting deer in corn fields in the 1980s meant looking for patches of brown amidst the grasses that grew between rows. Today? The space between each row is like an earthen highway from end to end, with nary a weed in sight. And that squeaky-clean agricultural landscape may be one reason deer across the Midwest are on a long and steady decline.

GMOs and broad-spectrum herbicides are largely responsible for high-yield agricultural production. Data from the USDA shows that herbicide use (mainly glyphosate) increased from 15 million pounds in 1996 to 159 million pounds in 2012. During that same period, whitetails populations have been declining.

A coincidence? Probably. But the inverse relationship between increases in genetically and chemically intensive agriculture and declining deer populations is unsettling to some observers.

"And there is not a single, credible, peer-reviewed study that I'm aware of that shows GMOs are bad for deer or bad for wildlife. And the same goes for glyphosate," says Kip Adams, director of education and outreach for the Quality Deer Management Association.

But, Adams says, there might be GMO- and glyphosate-related impacts that are less easy to track. The wholesale loss of weedy cover is something that's worth discussing, Adams says.

Read full, original post: [Weed Whackers: Clean Fields May Be Hurting Midwest Deer Populations](#)