

HUNTING SEASON

About this time each year, many of my friends have a tendency to lose much of their good judgment. Men, and sometimes women, who generally demonstrate good sense and rational thinking, somehow convince themselves there is joy in living like homeless people, in a cold tent, on a muddy hillside, hunting the "big buck".

In most cases, the hunt takes place while time sensitive chores are ignored and undone in the valley below. Limited financial resources are squandered to buy a big 4-wheel drive truck, powerful enough to pull a 24 foot trailer loaded with costly four wheelers. In some cases, the truck pulls a stock trailer loaded with fat horses that only get ridden once a year, and that is during the deer hunt. When the tent isn't comfortable enough any more, modern tandem axle R.V's are carefully towed into spaces where all the comforts of home can be enjoyed. It seems many of those R.V's end up in the repair shop after the hunt is over.

Serious hunters, of course, need a new rifle, lots of shells, plenty of grub and in too many cases lots of beer. The victorious hunters are of the opinion they will need to spend advance time scouting for deer, sighting in the rifles, roaring all over the mountain on ATV's making deeper ruts in roads that are often muddy and wet.

Whenever I tease my friends about their annual malady I am reminded they are only attempting to feed their families by putting food in the freezer. Wanting to be helpful, I share a recipe I read a few years ago from Jelsoft Enterprises Ltd. on how to make beef taste like venison.

1. Start one year before cutting date.
2. Feed the steer only wild berries, slough grass, weeds, sage and tree bark.
3. About two hours before you are ready to butcher, have a friend chase the beef around to get the blood and adrenaline into the meat.
4. Shoot the beef immediately after it has been chased (make sure it's a gut shot, and to do this via a hind quarter). A good shot will tenderize the meat and get as much hair as possible into the impart area.
5. Drag the beef to a slough and field dress in the slough. Make sure to get as much grass, weeds, cattails, and debris in as possible.
6. Drag the beef at least one half mile across a summer fallow field to get plenty of dirt mixed into the wound and the carcass interior.
7. Load the beef on a car/truck and drive down first a gravel road at least five miles, then down a highway. This will get as much highway grit, bugs and rocks imbedded in the meat as possible (for extra flavor, do this in the rain.)
8. Hang the beef in the garage (make sure it is low enough so that the dog can chew on the hind quarter).
9. At least once a day have your wife idle a vehicle for five minutes in the garage. Carbon monoxide adds greatly to the flavor.
10. When the carcass smells so bad you can hardly stand being in the garage, the beef is ready to cut and wrap.

Properly followed, the above steps will ensure that your beef is mistaken for venison by even the most avid sportsman. Everyone will marvel at how much venison you have and how good it tastes and you won't have to put on that crazy outfit and walk for 300 miles.