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Buckeye Farm News

Here's a debate taking place in Ohio's hunting community. Ohio Farm Bureau currently doesn't have a position on this issue. What do you think?

Legalize pistol caliber rifles

Michigan, Indiana, Kentucky, West Virginia and Pennsylvania all allow rifle hunting in one form or another, the Buckeye Firearms Association noted in a proposal to legalize pistol caliber rifles for deer hunting in Ohio.

But the organization is quick to point out that these

guns are not high powered rifles.

"There is a negative perception with pistol caliber rifles because people don't get past the word rifle without thinking high powered," said Dan Allen, a Buckeye Firearms volunteer.

According to Aaron Kirkingburg, a Buckeye Firearms leader, pistol caliber rifles are similar to pistols, with a longer barrel and a stock for stability. The group acknowledges that perception is an issue and that some education will be necessary.

"This is a tool for keeping the deer population under control and the pistol cartridge rifle is an easy, effective and inexpensive tool that appeals to many," Kirkingburg said.

"These guns have a reduced recoil and are lighter, which appeals to women, youth and those with medical conditions," Allen said. "My father has a pacemaker;

"There is a negative perception with pistol caliber rifles because people don't get past the word rifle without thinking high powered." ~Dan Allen, Buckeye Firearms volunteer

therefore, he cannot use a shotgun, but he could use a pistol caliber rifle."

They also emphasized that private property owners have the final say of what hunters can use when hunting on their property.

"Ultimately the decision is up to the property owner, and if they don't want hunting on their property with pistol caliber rifles they can make that a rule for their property," Allen said.

Concerns

Ohio Department of Natural Resources' Division of Wildlife is concerned that legalizing these guns will lower access to private property because of the misconception that these are high powered rifles.

"Currently in Ohio you can hunt with pistols. What folks are pushing for is 'why can't we hunt with pistol cartridges in rifle form? Let's put it on our shoulder rather than in our hand,'" said Mike Tonkovich, Division of Wildlife state deer project leader.

"It's about perception because we are very concerned about access to private property. We've done a lot of work with Farm Bureau trying to increase access to private property, which is where most of the deer are in the state and we don't want to compromise that by misinforming the public that Ohio has legalized rifles," he said.

Tonkovich wants landowners who are allowing hunters on their property to study the issue.

"I don't see this as a way to effectively manage our deer herd by legalizing these rifles," he said. "The positive side of it will be that it would keep hunters in the game that may not otherwise and may add some younger hunters."