

HUNTING

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R E T A I L E R

July/August 2021 | Tools & Gear



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The Newest Hunting Shotgun Line
From American Tactical Inc.

CASH IN WITH
BIG DOLLAR
DOVES

COOK UP SALES
Help Your Customers
Become at-Home
Wild Game Chefs

AMERICAN TACTICAL INC.
The Scout Shotgun. Choose From
Four Different Models.

See more info on page 5

KNIVES &
MULTI-TOOLS
Give Yourself an Edge

GUNSMITHING
FOR SMALL RETAILERS

BECOME A MASTER
MARKETER
Strategies You Can Bank On

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HUNT LIKE A WARRIOR



At SIG SAUER our commitment to innovation and next generation product development has led to dominance in the Military and Law Enforcement industries worldwide. Now, we are bringing that same warrior mindset to the hunt. Introducing the complete lineup of SIG SAUER Elite Series hunting ammunition. Formulated to be exceedingly accurate and provide unrivaled terminal ballistics, each of the Elite Series ammunition products delivers the performance you expect from SIG SAUER. **HUNT LIKE A WARRIOR.**



RIDGELINE

THE RIDGELINE IS OUR QUINTESSENTIAL HUNTING RIFLE.

Offered in a variety of chamberings, the rifle features a sporter carbon fiber composite gunstock and a stainless steel radial muzzle brake built around a light target contour Christensen Arms carbon fiber wrapped barrel. The Ridgeline weighs in starting at 6.3 pounds and is backed by the Christensen Arms Sub-MOA Guarantee.

Select chamberings are available in a left-handed.



CHRISTENSENARMS.COM/RIDGELINE



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Southwick Associates Releases Reports on the Size of the 2020 Hunting, Shooting & Sportfishing Markets

Southwick Associates has released two reports, one covering the \$10 billion fishing tackle market and the other covering the \$24 billion firearms, hunting and recreational shooting market.

"2020 presented many business challenges that both spiked and suppressed sales," said Nancy Bacon, Vice President at Southwick Associates. "COVID-19 and social issues drove demand to all-time highs. Simultaneously, the same factors resulted in depleted wholesale and retail inventories, closed factories, shortages of materials and backed-up ports, causing significant supply pressures. These new market size reports are designed to help businesses better understand the new operating world."

All major categories tracked by Southwick Associates showed increases. After slight growth in the



first quarter of 2020, firearms and ammunition sales exploded the rest of the year, experiencing growth exceeding 60% even with supply constraints. Hunting and shooting sports accessories also saw growth, along with fishing tackle retail sales that saw an overall 55% increase.

present retail unit and dollar sales estimates. The hunting/shooting report lists more than 100 products directly associated with hunting and recreational shooting and includes breakouts by action type, caliber/gauge, the primary purpose for consumers' purchases and more.

For more information on Southwick's market size reports and to view a sample report, visit www.southwickassociates.com.

The new reports are available from Southwick Associates for a fee. Both

Make Plans Now for SHOT Show 2022

After a year off due to COVID-19, retailers and manufacturers are eagerly anticipating SHOT Show 2022, to be held January 18-21 at the Sands Expo Center in Las Vegas. To meet demand for constant expansion, the show will also have exhibits and booths in Caesar's Forum. The show continues to grow each year, and you won't want to miss it.

Visit www.shotshow.org for information on registering for the show and much more.

CZG SE Announces Closing of the Acquisition of Colt

Ceská zbrojovka Group SE (CZG; it sells products mainly under the CZ, CZ-USA, Dan Wesson, Brno Rifles and 4M Systems brands) has successfully closed on its acquisition of 100% of the equity interest in Colt Holding Company LLC, the parent company of the U.S. firearms manufacturer Colt's Manufacturing Company LLC as well as its Canadian subsidiary, Colt Canada Corporation.

In a press release, CZG and Colt expressed confidence that the merger will bring significant operational, commercial and R&D synergies for the combined business, which generated pro-forma aggregated annual sales in excess of \$570 million in 2020 and which has more than 2,000 employees in the Czech Republic, the United States, Canada and Germany.

"With this acquisition, we have created a strategic relationship between CZG and Colt, which will bring significant opportunities for the group. We will focus on continuing to provide high quality products to our customers in a seamless manner as we harness the many synergies generated by this acquisition. We are confident that this combination will create value for our customers and

shareholders alike and strengthen these iconic brands," stated Lubomír Kovák, Chairman and President of CZG. "This merger also confirms our commitment to the North American market, which is an integral part of our growth strategy," he added.

Thanks to this acquisition, CZG gains further production capacity and positions itself to become a leading firearms manufacturer and a key partner globally for military, law enforcement and commercial customers.

"Colt is pleased to join forces with CZG. We are proud of our heritage and believe that the strength of the combined businesses and the many synergies created by the merger will enable us to honor our roots while also securing the future of the Colt brand. We look forward to continuing to deliver our high-quality products while also investing in innovation and new product offerings in the near future. We believe in the successful connection of our corporate cultures, the proven track record of our teams and the complementary nature of the CZ and Colt brands," stated Dennis Veilleux, President and CEO of Colt.

Leupold Sells Redfield Brand to Academy Sports + Outdoors

Leupold & Stevens, Inc., provider of sport optics, announced the sale of the Redfield brand to Academy Sports + Outdoors.

"The sale of Redfield to Academy Sports + Outdoors is part of our continued strategic focus on the Leupold brand," said Bruce Pettet, President and Chief Executive Officer of Leupold & Stevens, Inc.

"We will continue to produce the world's best performance optics for the elite outdoor athlete."

The sale includes the brand rights for the Redfield brand of sports optics. Academy will develop and sell quality sports optics exclusively for Academy Sports + Outdoors under the Redfield brand going forward. Leupold will continue to support the war-

ranty obligations for any legacy purchases of Redfield optics.

Academy is a leading full-line sporting goods and outdoor recreation retailer in the United States. Originally founded in 1938 as a family business in Texas, Academy has grown to 259 stores across 16 contiguous states. **HR**



This month's cover brought to you by:



AMERICAN TACTICAL

American Tactical Inc. Scout

The newest shotgun line from American Tactical Inc, Scout, has arrived! Scout is a line of Turkish shotguns made for the everyday hunter. The Scout line of shotguns are available in single shot, pump-action and semi-automatic. These shotguns are available with wood or polymer furniture and all common gauges (12, 20, 28 and .410).

The first two shotguns from the Scout line are the single shot versions. The SC-series is a camouflage polymer furniture shotgun with a 23" barrel. The eye-catching SC-series has a fiber-optic sight, a hammerless center bolt safety and a removable bridge mount for the optic of your choice. The MSRP for the SC-Series is \$189.95 for all three gauges (12, 20, .410). We also included two different chokes: 1 turkey and 1 modified.

Next, the SH-series, is another single shot, but with wood furniture. This shotgun comes in 12 and 20 gauge and each gauge has a corresponding barrel. For the 12-gauge SH-series, the barrel is 28" and for the 20 gauge, the barrel is just two inches shorter at 26". Like the SC-series, the SH-series Scout comes with a removable bridge mount rail for optics. Unlike the SC-series though, the hammer is external. The choke that comes with the SH-series is a modified choke and the MSRP is 109.95. The wood furniture on all of the Scout series shotguns are oil finished and are made to withstand the elements.

The Scout line of shotguns are also available in pump-action and semi-automatic. These shotguns provide hunters the wide variety to fulfill any specific need when buying a new shotgun.

The P-series Scout is a pump-action shotgun with a 26" barrel and fiber-optic sights. Both the wood and black polymer furniture versions hold 5 rounds. The P-series with oil finished wood furniture comes in 12, 20, and 28 gauges plus .410 bore. The black polymer furniture version is available in 12 and 20 gauge. Choke tubes do come with the P-series shotguns ideal for several different hunts. The P-series Scout line is modestly priced at \$249.95 for the polymer furniture version and \$279.95 for the wood furniture version.

The Semi-Automatic Scout, or the SA-series, also is available with wood or black polymer furniture. Just like the P-Series, the SA-series has a 26" barrel and holds 5 rounds. Coming between \$289.95 and 389.95, The Scout SA-series is a considerably affordable semi-automatic hunting shotgun that will serve as an efficient tool for all your hunting needs.





Strengthen the Weakest Link on Your Team

Unless it's done correctly, dealing with the weakest link on your team is fraught with career peril.

BY KEN WYSOCKY

Anyone who's in the workplace long enough eventually runs into a slacker. You know the type — that one colleague who is the anchor weighing down your team's boat, the governor on your team's engine, the gale-force headwind in your team's face, the ... well, you get the picture.

Recognizing the resident laggard is easy. But handling the situation constructively can pose a bit of a challenge.

How so? Well, if done incorrectly, bringing a matter like this to your manager's attention might earn you a reputation as a get-ahead-at-all-costs tattler and career-wrecker. But ignoring the

situation also carries risks, such as logging burnout-inducing hours to cover for the slacker's deficiencies.

So how should you go about handling such a sensitive and untenable situation?

Just Have a Talk

First try talking to the colleague, but tread lightly, advises Allan Cohen, a distinguished professor in global leadership at Babson College in San Francisco. He also wrote a book with co-author David Bradford called *Influence Without Authority*.

"The first thing to do is ask the person if something is wrong," Cohen says. "But proceed with caution. There are always politi-

cal risks involved when talking to someone about someone else."

If the slacker behavior is a fairly recent development, there might be something specific that triggered it, such as marital trouble, personal health issues, a job-role change or a new supervisor, for example. Or perhaps the colleague lacks the skills to do his or her job effectively and needs training or is resentful about not getting a promotion, he suggests.

Don't Make It Personal

Obviously, having this conversation is a lot easier if you already have established a decent working relationship. But either way, it's important to frame the



conversation not as a personal attack, but as concern for the person's well-being, using open-ended questions. In short, ask why the person is a non-starter.

"It has to be a friendly inquiry," Cohen says. "It's always easier to get a conversation going with a general inquiry as opposed to going into accusatory mode. Perhaps you could say something along the lines of, 'Things don't seem to be going well for you — is something wrong?'"

Of course, if you don't have a good relationship with the person, it's a more difficult conversation. If that's the case, consider asking for help from a colleague who knows the person reasonably well, Cohen says.

Many experts recommend holding several of these conversations, especially if things don't improve right away. Keep in mind that it takes time to turn around an aircraft carrier, metaphorically speaking. But at some point, you need to specifically point out how the slacker's behavior is adversely affecting colleagues' ability to work.

"You can tell them that you're not out to get them in trouble, just interested in a solution to the problem," Cohen says. "Always leave open the possibility that there's a positive solution ... that it can be converted into a collaboration, not just a slash-and-burn approach. These problems rarely occur because someone is a bad person. Sometimes all it takes is some education or training or moving them to a job that's better suited to their skills."

Just the Facts

If the situation doesn't improve, things inevitably reach a tipping point where the only recourse is to escalate things and bring it to a manager's attention. If possible, it's helpful if the colleague is willing to join you in the meeting with your manager. If not, then it's fine to proceed alone, Cohen says.

But again, using a well-reasoned, low-key approach is critical to avoiding the aforementioned political and career repercussions.

"If you decide to take the matter upstairs, make it in the spirit of an inquiry," Cohen says. "Tell the manager you need help with addressing a problem, instead of just saying that 'X' is a lousy person who's always messing things up. Put it on the table not as if you're a workplace spy, but as someone who needs help resolving an issue so everyone can get their work done."

Providing your manager with specific, factual examples of how work has been adversely affected will help bolster your position. It will also reinforce to your manager that you're bringing up the matter for sound, objective business reasons, not political gain, Cohen says.

"There's a very fine balance involved in building a case," he says. "If not done correctly, you often can sound very one-sided and make it look like you're trying to harm somebody, which doesn't make you look good. I think it's better to go in and express concern for the situation and ask for advice about how to solve it in a constructive way."

Furthermore, be sure to tell your manager what you've already tried to do, Cohen adds.

"Whatever you do, don't ignore the situation and hope it will eventually get better."

Call to Action

Whatever you do, however, don't ignore the situation and hope it will eventually get better. Inaction hurts both the slacker and you and your team. How? Think about it this way: As a general rule, many people don't feel comfortable talking about how personal issues are affecting them at work — or asking for help, for that matter.

"So if someone is experiencing problems and no one asks what's wrong, the person feels like nobody gives a



damn and the situation only gets worse," Cohen says.

On the other end of the spectrum, when hardworking colleagues see someone slacking off without any consequences, they feel resentful. As a result, reduced morale and productivity may ensue, along with increased turnover.

"It's too demoralizing — a rotten-apple-in-the-barrel situation," Cohen says.

In the end, however, employees should never forget that they have the ability to influence others, even if they're not managers. The key is the power of reciprocity, which Cohen says is the basis of all influence. If you give someone what they want, which Cohen calls a "currency," they're more likely to give you what you want.

"You can influence colleagues or bosses by finding a currency they want and figuring out a way to give it to them," he says.

In the case of slackers, perhaps all they want is better information, better training or a better job that's more suited to their skill sets. And if they get it, your reciprocal reward might well be a harder-working colleague who helps your team shine. No more difficult conversations required. **HR**

↑ Confronting a slacker is best approached from a solution-oriented, "how can we make this better" angle that's not accusatory (at first).



Grills for Cooking Wild Game

Humans, and especially hunters, have a primal instinct to cook meat over fire. For most, these days, that means a grill.

BY MARK CHESNUT

While possibly not the number one reason millions of Americans love to hunt, eating wild game is right up there near the top. And from upland game birds to waterfowl to a variety of big-game species, there are plenty of opportunities to hunt wild game throughout the country and put some amazing meals on the table as a result.

Cooking wild game can be as simple as sprinkling it with salt and pepper and dropping it on a hot grill to preparing extravagant recipes with rubs, marinades and other more complicated aspects and cooking in a crockpot, cast-iron skillet or even sous vide machine. Regardless of how hunters like to prepare their meat for the table, experienced wild game chefs will tell you that the main way to ruin most wild game meat is to cook it too long to too high a temperature. Most game meat is extremely lean — one of the reasons it is so healthy — but that leanness makes it easy to overcook. While you should always cook wild game meat to a safe temperature, cooking it too long will invariably lead to a tough entrée that is much less enjoyable to eat than had it been cooked to a lower temperature. Consequently, a good meat thermometer is a wild game cook's best friend.

Of all the ways to cook wild game, cooking on an outdoor grill is a favorite for many hunters for game dishes from pheasant breasts to elk



steaks. That's important for hunting retailers, as those same grills that hunters seek to prepare their wild-game meals can become a profit center for those who sell the grills.

Let's take a look at three grills great for cooking a variety of wild game meats. Consider adding them to your sales inventory to capitalize on the ever-growing trend of wild game cooking.



WEBER GENESIS II SE-335

Not all wild game chefs are interested in getting into smoking meat. I wasn't until my family dragged me there kicking and screaming by buying me a smoker for Christmas one year — one of the best gifts I ever received.

However, for your customers who might be shopping for a more conventional gas-fueled grill, the Weber Genesis II SE-335 is an outstanding choice. It features a black finish, 9mm stainless steel rod cooking grates and a very convenient motion-activated handle light.

The grill's high-performance burners, a side burner and a sear station burner deliver up to 60,000 BTUs of combined output. The grill also is compatible with Weber's iGrill app-connected thermometer to monitor food from beginning to end, displaying real-time temperature on the user's mobile device (accessory sold separately).

The welded-tube frame, open-cart design includes plenty of much-needed prep space, along with two heavy-duty locking casters and two large wheels. The propane tank is stored to the side, freeing up the shelf space under the grill.

The Genesis II SE-335 boasts 513 square inches of grill space in the main grilling area, along with another 156 inches in the secondary grilling. It stands 47 inches high, is 59 inches wide and has a depth of 29 inches.

At about \$1,050, the Weber falls right in between the next two grills in price.



CAMP CHEF WOODWIND WIFI 24

The Camp Chef Woodwind WiFi 24 is another wood pellet grill/smoker offered by another top name in outdoor and wild-game cooking. And, the new Woodwind line is Camp Chef's most feature-packed grill, making it what the company calls the "smartest and most versatile grill on the market."

It's equipped with Camp Chef's PID and WiFi-enabled controller, so wild game chefs are able to stay connected to their grill through the Camp Chef app, meaning less running in and out the backdoor to check on meat and fuel. The PID controller enables chefs to regulate both smoke and temperature, controlling exactly how much smoke they incorporate into their cooking session by simply adjusting the smoke number, which ranges from 1 to 10.

The Woodwind WiFi 24 boasts a total rack surface area of 800 inches, with 429 inches on the bottom main rack. Hopper capacity is 22 pounds of pellets, so it will cook for a good long time before refilling. Total weight is 150 pounds so, again, I wouldn't plan on taking it on an overnight camping trip. But if you're headed for deer camp for a few weeks and planning on feeding a bunch of people, it's not so heavy you couldn't manage to get it loaded and unloaded with some assistance.

Other cool features that your hunting customers will love include a full-color screen monitor, four stainless steel meat probes, a 160- to 500-degree temperature range, and a handy and easy-to-use pellet hopper cleanout/purge. The grill also has an ash cleanout system, bottom utility shelf, cord management system, grease management system, stainless steel fire box and protective controller cover.

At about \$800, the Woodwind WiFi 24 will still cost your customer a chunk of change, but it will save them about 30 percent when compared to the Traeger.



TRAEGER IRONWOOD 650 PELLET GRILL

Traeger is a very popular name in grills, and there's a good reason why. The company has some of the finest grills available on the market, and while some are quite expensive, the company's lineup includes some models that fall into a lower, more affordable price range.

The Ironwood 650 is one of the latest in Traeger's line of pellet grills that can also be used as smokers. Since many wild game meats are delicious smoked, these combo grills are far more versatile than more conventional grills.

The Ironwood 650 boasts 650 square inches of total cooking space, giving you plenty of room to prepare meals for large gatherings or holiday events. Plus, the 20-pound pellet hopper capacity ensures you won't be jumping up out of your recliner over and over to keep it refilled while cooking.

Total weight of the Ironwood 650 is 149 pounds, so game chefs probably are not going to want to load it up for a weekend trip to the beach or for tailgating at the stadium on the weekend. But it's nearly the perfect size for a back patio grill for multiple cooking and smoking chores. Additionally, maximum temperature is 500 degrees, so hunters can use it for nearly any recipe they're likely to be trying.

One of the best things about the Traeger grill is that wild game chefs can control their grill anytime, anywhere using the Traeger App. The app makes it simple to adjust temperatures, monitor food and browse more than 1,600 recipes without setting down your beer. Cooks can also remotely monitor their pellet levels through the app, alleviating the need to walk out and check. And a built-in meat probe allows wild game chefs to monitor their meat's internal temperature without lifting the lid and letting it cool down inside.

Lastly, double side-wall insulation improves temperature consistency and pellet efficiency in cold weather, meaning your customers can use it to grill their favorite outdoor creation in any weather conditions.

MSRP is around \$1,200. **HR**



9 Fine Wild Game Ways to Cook Up Sales

At-home wild game chefs are branching way out these days with new recipes, cooking techniques and tools.



BY KEVIN REESE

Why do we hunt? Beyond hunting as a tool in America's model of conservation and the notable side benefit of off-the-grid bonding, we hunt for sustenance — wholesome, as-organic-as-it-gets table fare. From duck breasts and rabbit stew to venison backstraps and pork chops, we take to the field month after month and year after year to connect with our food sources.

Very few have penned the breadth and depth of a hunter's role in responsible consumption as well as vegetarian-turned-vegan-turned-hunter Tovar Cerulli, author of *The Mindful Carnivore*. Tovar's book is one of self-discovery by a man bent on dispatching the notion that hunting is beneficial. As it turned out, and the book is full of hot fresh data to support it, hunting is extraordinarily beneficial for multiple reasons; chief among them, at least to Cerulli, the role hunting plays in sustenance and its overall environmental impact. Let's be honest — if researching hunting forced introspection and ultimately converted a vegan into a hunter, it has to be a good thing, and we all know how good the meat is for you.

Of course, while Tovar's transformation from vegan to hunter may have been fueled by science, many of us are motivated by something a bit less complicated — taste. While a success in the field is great, true sense of accomplishment is often found on a plate next to the mashed potatoes and gravy.

While hunters are charged with taking game and eating



responsibly, retailers should feel a sense of responsibility in offering products designed for more efficient meat processing, longer shelf-life and, yes, tastier meals. That said, hunters look to retailers to make their lives as mindful carnivores better. Consider cooking up your retail sales while helping hunters find post-hunt success at the dinner table with this roundup of wild game cooking products.



WORK SHARP KEN ONION EDITION KNIFE SHARPENER

If my Pop said it once, he said it a thousand times: “If you never carry anything else, carry a good knife.” His collection included a dozen or more Case pocket knives, and I remember him using them often for tasks ranging from cutting meats and fruits to digging blue-collared crud from under his fingernails while imparting fatherly nuggets of wisdom — I never saw him without a knife, and it was always razor-sharp. Needless to say, I’m a chip off his block. I carry a knife, and it stays sharp. An affordable, pro-grade sharpener I have come to love is Work Sharp’s Ken Onion Edition sharpener.

Designed for quick, precise countertop sharpening of knives and tools without rolling edges, Work Sharp’s collaboration with knife-making hall of famer Ken Onion resulted in a one-size-fits-nearly-all system. This Ken Onion series sharpener handles flat and serrated blades, gut hooks, scissors, shears and more with micro blade-angle adjustability, variable speed and a healthy array of 12-inch, extra-coarse 120-grit to extra-fine 6,000-grit belts. Whether your customers are processing meat, preparing for a hunt or just looking for a sharpener capable of handling every blade in their collection, Work Sharp is sure to be a great fit. www.worksharptools.com



HME 12-PIECE DELUXE FIELD DRESSING KIT

Seasoned hunters agree, the first step after game recovery is field dressing. A close second to cooling meat down is skinning, perhaps followed by quartering, deboning or completely processing game for the freezer. It’s been said time and time again that we eat what we kill. The importance of offering customers a robust processing system like HME Products’ 12-Piece Deluxe Field Dressing Kit simply cannot be overstated.

The HME 12-Piece Deluxe Field Dressing Kit is housed in a sturdy molded carrying case and consists of a butcher knife, small caping knife, gut-hook skinning knife, boning knife, bone saw, shears and a butcher fork. Each tool boasts rubberized handles and stainless steel blades, and kit accessories include rubber gloves, a rib spreader and a 14-x10-inch cutting board. www.hmeproducts.com

WESTON BUTCHER SERIES NO. 8 MEAT GRINDER

Field dressing aside, hunters who choose to process their own meat need a meat grinder. Considering performance and affordability, it is hard to beat Weston’s Butcher Series No. 8 Meat Grinder for maximized harvesting and processing of meat into burger; in fact, I couldn’t imagine home-processing without a meat grinder.

The Weston Butcher Series No. 8 Meat Grinder is a countertop processor capable of grinding up to 6 pounds per minute via a .5-horsepower, 35-watt air-cooled motor. The Butcher Series No. 8 Grinder features precisely machined steel gears, an off-set head designed for faster processing, medium and coarse grinding plates, multiple funnels, stuffing spacer and non-slip feet. www.westonbrands.com



CAMP CHEF ALL-PURPOSE SEASONING

Those who know me would say the way to my heart is through my stomach. Not only do I appreciate the health benefits of a good venison steak, but I also love the flavor. Adding some flavorful kick with a little seasoning is even better! Hunters are always looking for tips, tricks and recipes to turn flavor up a notch, and offering seasonings like Camp Chef’s lineup is a great way to enhance their post-hunt experiences without taking up a lot of shelf space.

Camp Chef has become a leading hunting industry supplier of outdoor cooking systems and accessories that cater to customers with an affinity for wild game. With such focus, it makes sense that the company’s all-purpose seasoning is a perfect complement to venison backstraps, tenderloins, burgers and more; of course, it’s also perfect for pork, beef and even greens. Garlic, onion, paprika, red and green peppers, sugar, salt and other ingredients combine to give Camp Chef’s All-Purpose Seasoning a mix of sweet and spicy flavor sure to keep diners asking for seconds and customers returning for more. If you have the room, Camp Chef’s additional seasonings — Citrus Herb, Mango Chipotle and Kickin’ BBQ Rub — are well worth the retail space, too. www.campchef.com



HI MOUNTAIN SEASONING SAUSAGE CASINGS

Diehard hunters with a penchant for processing their own meat need options. Offering products for the hunt or even basic processing isn't enough. More than steaks, do-it-yourselfers enjoy more specialized processing like sausage making. Unfortunately, finding the right products to make sausage, casings as an example, can be frustrating. Truth be told, the first place hunters make look for meat processing accessories is on your shelf. Earning more sales by offering options is an easy decision to make, considering the alternative — your customers finding easy-to-stock items like sausage casings elsewhere.

Hi Mountain Seasonings' 30mm bulk casing are a perfect example of a specialized accessory customers shouldn't have to search for high and low to find. Like jerky, the ability to make various types of sausages, including Polish, Italian and yes, summer sausage, is pretty appealing to hunters. Even more appealing is the ability to find products like that on your shelf. Hi Mountain's 30mm bulk casings are constructed of clear collagen, and each pack can accommodate up to 30 pounds of meat. www.himtnjerky.com



LEM JERKY GUN

Years ago, my brother-in-law took a great bull elk and made quite a haul of jerky. A couple of weeks later, I was with him in the Big Sky state with my own elk tag. He gave me a 5-pound bag of elk jerky to take home to my wife. Ten days later, I walked in our door with an unfilled tag. When my wife asked for the jerky, I didn't have a good answer for her. It was gone. Elk hunting is hard, hungry work. Truth be told, jerky is a highly effective way to win friends and influence people, but it is also expensive — unless you make it at home. That said, a quality jerky gun like LEM's iteration wields a lot of social power, and retailers certainly should consider offering clients that kind of trigger time.

LEM's ultra-popular jerky gun uses industry-leading drive to process seasoned ground meat into perfectly sized strips of jerky or meat sticks. The LEM Jerky Gun's tube accommodates up to three-quarters of a pound of ground meat and includes a half-inch round tip for meat sticks as well as a 1 $\frac{1}{16}$ x $\frac{3}{16}$ -inch flat tip for strips. The LEM Jerky gun even includes seasoning for five pounds of meat to help your customers earn their places among friends. www.lemproducts.com



WESTON 4-TIER DEHYDRATOR

Whether you are catering to hunters or those looking for the perfect gift for their hunter, it's tough to beat a dehydrator. Like a great knife set or grinder, a dehydrator is a DIY meat processor's must have — this means you must consider carrying them in your inventory. Weston offers a robust yet affordable dehydrator sure to beef up gift and post-hunt sales.

The Weston 4-Tier Dehydrator combines ease of use, a countertop design, vertical air flow, 250 watts of power and an ultra-quiet fan to efficiently dehydrate meat and other food products without sacrificing flavor. True to its name, this Weston dehydrator features four adjustable 12-inch tiers and 3.14 square feet of space to dehydrate larger volumes of meat and other goodies, and it is easy to clean. Seriously, if you are considering stocking jerky guns and sausage casings, carrying a dehydrator also makes good sense. www.westonbrands.com

CAMP CHEF INFRARED COOKING THERMOMETER

Help your customers make their best burgers and steaks yet by equipping them with the answer to cooking's most perplexing question — surface temperature. Grilling steaks at 450 degrees Fahrenheit can be challenging when your options are low, medium or high. What happens when you open the cover, and how long does it take to get back up to temperature? Surface temperature can make or break a meal, but the solution for your cooking customers is simple — a digital surface thermometer, and every grill master should own one.

Camp Chef offers a high-quality yet certainly affordable infrared cooking thermometer. The thermometer measures heat by detecting infrared radiation and employing a sensor to convert the information into a displayed temperature reading simple folks like me can understand. Camp Chef's version of an IR thermometer comes in pistol-grip form with a trigger, laser for more precise readings, and a backlit digital display — simply put, shoot and read the temperature in any lighting environment. Whether you consider traditional cooking thermometers, IR thermometers or other heat-reading technology, positioning these types of products near your grills and other cooking systems is a great way to add accessory sales. www.campchef.com



FOODSAVER GAMESAVER BIG GAME FOOD PRESERVATION SYSTEM

The amount of time it took for my brothers-in-law and me to cut process 11 deer is something I will never forget. We began at roughly 5:30 p.m. and worked feverishly to cut deer and grind burger until after 3 a.m. My sister-in-law and her son had roles, too. They were tasked with washing and wrapping the meat, first in shrink-wrap and then in butcher paper. The added step in shrink-wrapping was to protect from freezer burn, but it also added quite a bit of time to the process — so much so that when we finished cutting up meat and walked into the kitchen, we discovered she and my nephew had quit their posts, leaving us to finish the job. We spent the following two hours washing, shrink-wrapping, paper-wrapping, writing meat descriptions on packages and filling the freezer. It took 12 hours to get over 400 pounds of venison in the freezer. What would have helped? Today's FoodSaver vacuum-sealing technology.

This is the end of meat processing's road: to get the meat packaged, marked and stacked in the freezer, and a package system like FoodSaver's GameSaver Big Game Food Preservation System is more than a game saver. In the world of overused descriptors, it really is a game-changer. FoodSaver's GameSaver system eliminates shrink-wrapping, paper-wrapping and taping, and it produces an airtight seal that protects your customers' hard-earned, freezer-stored meat for longer than has ever been possible via tradi-



tional butcher-paper wrapping. The GameSaver Big Game system features "intelligent sealing control" that accommodates up to 80 consecutive seals. The GameSaver also includes rubberized control buttons, oversized drip tray, accessory hose, sample vacuum-seal bags, built-in storage and a 15-foot, 12-volt power cord. Of course, if you are going to offer your customers an easier way to protect and store meat, make sure you make a little room for FoodSaver bags. www.foodsaver.com **HR**

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Interview: Weatherby

With new shooters and hunters joining the ranks in droves, Weatherby has experienced record growth like other firearm companies. What can we expect for the rest of 2021?

BY HILARY DYER

In the middle of the hottest firearms market in years, Weatherby has been thriving — but the company isn't sitting on its laurels and riding the wave. We checked in with Adam Weatherby (pictured above), CEO, to find out what's in store for the rest of this year and beyond.

HR: What can we expect out of Weatherby in the second half of 2021?

AW: The first part of 2021 was focused on catching up on production in order to meet the unprecedented demand in the marketplace. We are adding a new 20-gauge Orion over-and-under shotgun to our lineup that shoulders really well! We have some awesome things in store already for 2022 that I am very excited about.

HR: What specific product category or model have you seen the most growth in recently?

AW: Honestly, the record-breaking market conditions have resulted in incredible growth across all categories. Our shotguns have been amazingly popular, and we believe that a lot of newer shooters have picked up a Weatherby shotgun this past year. Our ammunition has experienced all-time high demand as well. We don't make pistol or AR ammunition, but even our Weatherby cartridges have been nearly impossible to keep in stock.

HR: Is there developing technology in the rifle world that might change the way hunters buy or use hunting rifles in the future?





← Weatherby reports that although it doesn't make pistol or AR ammunition, it's seen record ammo sales. The company's hunting cartridges have been nearly impossible to keep in stock.

AW: That's a great question. It always astonishes me how old most of the popular rifle designs are that we still produce and use today around the world. I do believe that there is technology that will result in innovation over the next several years across our industry. I mean, my grandfather would have never expected a Weatherby rifle with a carbon fiber stock and barrel fixed to a titanium action with a 3D-printed recoil pad. In fact, due to his classic taste, he probably wouldn't like the Mark V Backcountry very much — that is, until he saw customer demand and the sales that followed.

HR: We know there's been an unprecedented level of firearm sales in late 2020 and early 2021. Because you are so focused on hunting-specific firearms, has the demand hit Weatherby as hard as the rest of the industry?

AW: I am not sure if it has hit us as hard as many others in the industry, but the demand is unlike anything we have seen since my grandfather started the business in 1945. Many of the other spikes we have seen in the past couple decades have been shorter-lived and often focused around one main thing (i.e., an election). However, what we are seeing now is a result of many different things. From a major political election to a worldwide pandemic and even racial tensions that resulted in violence, it really has been a storm of events leading to what we have seen this past year.

For instance, for the first time in many years, we saw an uptick in hunting license and tag sales across the country. There were more people getting outside and an increase of people longing to fill their freezers with meat the old-fashioned way. Some of the meat shortages encouraged people to pick up a firearm and hunt for perhaps

the first time ever. All of this has resulted in an increase in firearms and ammunition across the board, not only in self-defense products.

HR: Do you have any predictions on what we can expect out of the firearms industry in the next year? The next five years?

AW: I really believe the focus of many manufacturers this next year is filling the demand that exists. Frankly, it doesn't make sense to launch a lot of new products when you can't deliver the ones that are already on order. I know that many other brands are doing what we have done in expanding manufacturing, acquiring more equipment, hiring more people, and expanding the supply chain. Even with this, we are unable to come close to meeting the demand we have. However, we all know it will slow down at some point. It is at these "slowdowns" where we see brands really start to innovate. After a couple strong

years, I believe we will see manufacturers with an increase in capital that can be used to bring forth new product development. Additionally, I believe the political rhetoric that exists and constant threat of increased regulations will also help dictate where things go in the next few years.

HR: Where does Weatherby see potential for growth? How about non-growth? Is there part of the industry that's shrinking?

AW: With the amount of new gun owners this past year, there is certainly a lot of growth potential to see those new shooters and hunters get more involved and progress in the shooting sports. As newer shooters begin to adopt new technologies, it may help speed up innovation across the industry. Take carbon fiber barrels for example — the percentage of higher-end bolt-action rifles sold with a carbon fiber barrel in the last five years has gone



↑ Top: Weatherby Orion shotgun
Bottom: Weatherby Vanguard Accuguard rifle



up tremendously. Many people saw it as a fad, but the reception from shooters has been overwhelming, and the increase in accuracy for a lighter-weight rifle has proven to be worth the extra money. These newer shooters may just end up being more receptive to trying new things, and I think that will be good for our industry. As these new trends and technologies continue to grow, it also means that there will be more traditional materials and processes that shrink. For instance, Weatherby was long known for its high-end wood rifle stocks. Although we still offer these in our line, the percentage of overall sales continues to decrease in these old beauties year after year.

HR: COVID-19 is all anyone can talk about these days. How has it affected Weatherby in the last year?

AW: Like many other manufacturers in our industry, we went through times of fear, times of frustration and times of record sales. One of the most difficult things is



are so glad we did. It would have been much harder to navigate these crazy times while trying to manage the sea of regulations that California put in place this past year. Our team in Sheridan, Wyoming, did an outstanding job during these uncertain and unstable times.

“Like many other manufacturers in our industry, we went through times of fear, times of frustration and times of record sales.”

the inability to accurately forecast. Many of the shortages you are seeing in the industry were a result of what we have called a “broken crystal ball.” When COVID hit the economy hard in the spring of 2020, many companies were predicting doom and gloom as businesses were fearful they wouldn’t be deemed essential or that the factory would have to shut down due to an outbreak. Then the demand went through the roof, and most firearm and ammunition makers still haven’t been able to keep up. To say it has been a rollercoaster is an understatement. I will tell you one thing — we were very fortunate to have been operating in the state of Wyoming during this time. After 74 years in California, we made the move to this great state in 2019 and

HR: How does Weatherby support its dealers?

AW: I would hope that all Weatherby dealers know that we have a great team in place to help whenever they need it. Whether it be one of our field sales reps or the team in Sheridan, we are still small enough to give the time and attention when it’s needed. One of the primary ways we can support dealers right now is just to get them product. They can’t make money unless we ship them guns and ammo. We take every order seriously and long to put products on retailers’ shelves so that when the customer comes in looking for that product, they can find it. Whether they buy directly from Weatherby or through one of our distributors, our team prides themselves in helping, however needed.

HR: Do you have any advice for retailers about selling hunting long guns in general and Weatherby products specifically?

AW: I don’t know if I have too much great advice here. Our Mark V Action is unique in that it has the shortest bolt lift in the industry. A 700 platform rifle has a 90-degree bolt lift, our Mark has a 54-degree bolt lift. Describing how and why that matters is important. Scope clearance, less distance in the heat of the moment, and ease of use are important and something that is better to compare in the hands of the consumer.

Also, I do know that our dealers who 1) stock the right products and 2) train their associates on those products tend to do best. I don’t think that is anything that most store owners, or even associates, don’t know. I do know one thing though: When you choose to go after a line and are intentional about it, it can really grow sales. Those Weatherby dealers of ours who can sell our products well have really bought into Weatherby from the top down.

HR: As the total number of hunters fluctuates across the country, how has that impacted your growth strategy?

AW: As I mentioned above, we were delighted to finally see an

uptick in hunting license sales this past year. Although the majority of our customers hunt, we do recognize that there are some who prefer range time over time in the field. For instance, plinking steel at 1,000 yards with a 6.5-300 Wby Mag with our Accumark Elite is a ton of fun. Our vision statement communicates that we exist to inspire the dreams of hunters and shooters. We will continue to develop, manufacture and sell products that fit both shooters and hunters.

HR: What’s your personal favorite Weatherby product, and why?

AW: That always changes. However, this past year it was the Mark V Backcountry Ti in 6.5 Wby RPM. I love a good lightweight hunting rifle, as I tend to do a lot of DIY backcountry hunting in some steep terrain. However, prior to this rifle, I felt like customers often had to sacrifice ballistic performance if they wanted to shed weight. The premise of this rifle and cartridge combination was to provide magnum performance in a sub-5-pound rifle in a production rifle. I am proud to say that my team was able to accomplish this, and I carried this rifle with pride on many hunts this past year through some pretty challenging terrain. **HR**





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Become a Marketing Master

Even in a hot selling market, you can't rest on your laurels when it comes to marketing your shop.



BY MICHAEL D. FAW

Does it seem that the customer traffic coming through your business' front door has dwindled? Are items that used to move at a quick pace from the shelf to the check-out counter now seemingly frozen in place? Wondering why? If your business and your sales are stuck in neutral, it could be time to put a marketing campaign into high gear.

First steps to become a marketing master — gather the details and make a plan.

Marketing strategies should be a key part of any productive business plan and part of your ongoing business practices. The best roads to profits can often be mastering the details of how to market to your customers — and the surrounding region. From marketing a business and its wares and services to promoting products to visitors/customers who step within the walls of your store or range,

it pays to master marketing.

The marketing process is far more than buying an ad in a newspaper or placing an ad on a local cable or TV channel. Marketing can also help educate customers and better bridge the connection between you and them. Some businesses see sales as the work to convert product into cash by encouraging the customer to buy. Marketing starts that process by calling the product(s) and your retail store or range to the customer's attention. It's much like planting a seed — or thought.

When making your marketing plans, take inventory and talk to your customers. Search out the reasons why customers come through your door, what they buy, what they say — and what they tell their friends. These key points can provide messages for ads you create or marketing messages you promote. Marketing is calling attention — or more attention

↑ If you have a range, all marketing information should show you are willing and able to help others learn about firearms and shooting.





“The marketing process is far more than buying an ad in a newspaper or placing an ad on a local cable or TV channel.”

↑ Images that show customers using products you sell always help build that customer connection.

— to the things you and your staff do well. There are many ways to gain the interest of customers. From Facebook to your website to fliers you place in shopping bags to printed circulars dropped at the post office for mass mail distribution, you can garner more attention. Then you need to define your message.

The message you move in your marketing efforts could be something as simple as you are the region’s exclusive dealer of a certain brand of rifles or much-sought treestands, or that your business is the city’s leading dealer of certain products. Zero in on what makes you stand out against the competition, and remember to explore co-op dollars if you take this approach to promotions with specific products mentioned. Then blow your own horn and motivate customers to stop and shop.

To better move your marketing message, develop a timeline of when what message and the delivery method needs to be completed or submitted. Marketing is the time to put your best foot forward, so plan to hire graphic pros and photographers so you look professional on print and in promotions. Completing those chores is not the time to let a high school art student make your graphic pieces.

Be creative in the message you craft. For example, nearly everyone knows about Virginia’s promo slogan: Virginia is for Lovers. It’s an easy-to-remember campaign that gets attention — and

→ A display such as this catches attention, draws customers and could be the type of image you include in marketing programs.





it lets everyone know the state welcomes visitors. Great marketing! You could do something very creative that calls attention to your business, such as organizing an annual campaign to buy bulletproof vests for the local law enforcement K-9 units or supporting a children's wing in the local hospital. Have a brainstorming session with employees or close friends to develop a slogan if you need one.

The message, the delivery channel and the call-to-action in any advertising and marketing campaign should be quick to read, easy to understand and on target. Simple messages such as "Stock Up!," "Set your Sights," "Dove Season Starts Soon" and others grab interest and remind customers in a subtle way.

REACH OUT, WAY OUT

While marketing sends out the details on your business, its products and the services available to your customers, you should explore ways to grow that reach to gain new customers. This outreach could include having a booth at regional gun shows, placing a billboard beside a busy highway in the area or advertising in statewide magazines that focus on products your customers shop for with you.

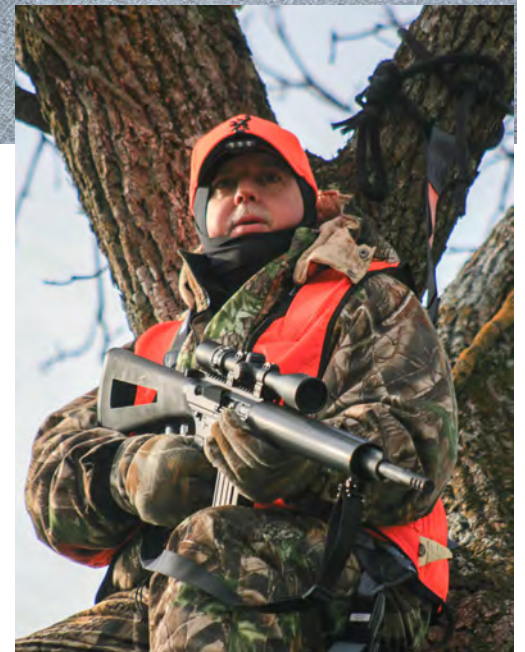
You should also diversify the customer groups you reach out to. If your shop is full hunting 24/7,

↑ Even if you're primarily a hunting shop, don't forget that customers who shoot often shoot *everything*. It might be time to branch out into more tactical guns and gear.

you may also find customers in the self-defense, tactical and other niche markets who will cross over and purchase items — especially ammunition — from your retail shop. Those groups will need to see different messages through different channels, such as an ad or banner at a local competitive shooting event, to learn about your business.

Reaching across the table to new customer bases can also be accomplished at county fairs in rural areas or possibly at a statewide hunter expo such as the Dixie Deer Classic held in Raleigh, North Carolina, each March. If you pursue this outreach plan and attend consumer shows, go with eye catching items to display, much sought products to sell, and be ready to hand out lots of brochures and flyers with details on your location, your website and contact information and the dates of any mega sales or annual events in your store.

It pays to also grow your business base in your backyard — your local community. Attend networking events such as those held by the chamber of commerce or other groups. If you can, host



↑ While you're reaching out to other markets, don't neglect your base, such as the large deer hunting crowd.

these meetings in your shop as an open house so other businesses and leaders know what you sell and how your business serves the community and citizens who live there. Collaborate with other businesses and especially the ones on your street or block. Pull your share and then some in the community effort and be ready to gain attention.





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A top marketing strategy today is using social media — and using it often. If you are posting text and images once a week, or only putting store hours and general info into those such as Facebook and Instagram channels, you are far behind. Social media has become the new gossip grapevine or word-of-mouth in the web age. You need to post frequently, use many images and announce nearly everything connected to your range or retail shop. Feel free to show customers, staff, the dog sleeping behind the counter and all sorts of things that can build and promote that human connection. There is, however, a line between promoting and boasting and bragging. Stay on the right side or risk turning customers off.

Another way to effectively market is to build on an email list and use that list to keep in touch with customers regularly. You can build the list with names of customers who enter an in-your-store-only contest to win a prize, or who fill out a questionnaire on your website or in the shop — or both.

Email marketing programs such as Constant Contact or MailChimp help you send messages, track open rates and determine responses and

reader actions. You can also easily segment customers by shopping and buying habits. Explore your options, the costs and the results you seek to achieve, then move your message. This type marketing can help you see successes — and plan future marketing projects. If you need help, the Small Business Administration (www.SBA.gov) and other agencies have programs to help you develop your marketing plan.

Everyone loves a deal — period. Creating and offering a package, such as a well-stocked home self-defense kit or range bag any SWAT officer would love to have, can generate interest within a specific shooting community that comes through your door. These giveaways or special promotions do gain attention and are spread near and far by word of mouth. If entrants must fill a card and drop that in a box in your store, be certain the box is located near items that sell well.

WHEN TO MOVE MARKETING MESSAGES

Remember that information moves at various speeds. Your store's Facebook page could let



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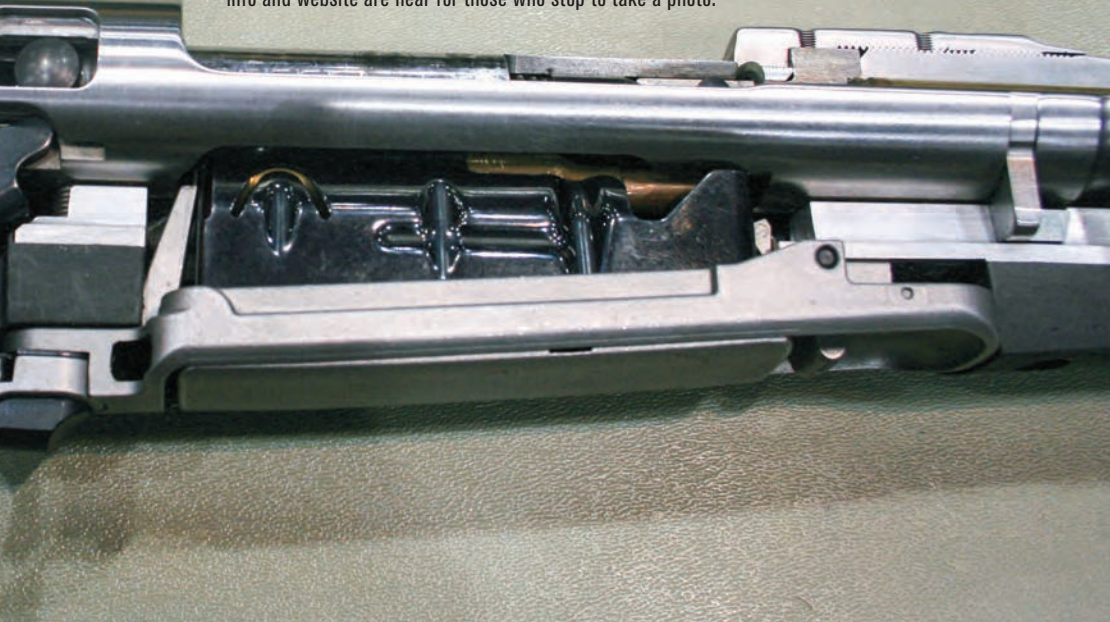
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Displays such as this help call attention at shows and with some in-store marketing projects. Be certain your contact info and website are near for those who stop to take a photo.



those customers who follow you know about newly arrived products — today. If you post something at lunch time today, however, be realistic in expectations of when customers will arrive. Most customers in today's hectic world need to also plan and prepare to shop. Unless they are buying online, they need to find time to make the drive, shop and pay.

On special sales events such as holiday shopping that fills parking lots in late November and most of December, you need to start marketing in October or earlier. Get ahead of the competition, plant the seed to buy in the customer's mind about your retail business and the products, and then give time for the customer to become motivated. Your marketing messages could be the motivator that causes the customer to take action.

When the dust settles after a marketing project is completed, take the time to evaluate everything — and keep notes. What did you do, what happened and what did customers do? Answering these many questions will put you on the trail to becoming a marketing master. **HR**

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GUNSMITHING FOR THE SMALL RETAILER

Provide the services your customers want without adding space or hiring a gunsmith.

BY DOUG LARSON







As a retailer, you know you need to provide products and services your customers want. Gunsmithing is one of those services, but it just isn't always feasible.

Until now, that is. For zero overhead, you can offer your customers the services of one of the top gunsmiths in the country. And you can make money doing it.

Marty Enloe has been gunsmithing for nearly two decades and recently opened his own shop, Enloe Customs (www.enloecustomguns.com) after his former employer, ROBAR Companies, closed its doors. ROBAR was one of the top gunsmith operations in the country, and it was largely due to the quality of work that ROBAR produced. And that was heavily influenced by the fact that Enloe was the head gunsmith.

ROBAR closed because demand for gunsmith services has dropped. As a retailer, you face a similar problem every day. You can never be certain that demand for your store's products and services will always be there. So, giving the

customer what he or she wants is a good way to increase the odds that your store will continue to have enough demand to keep operating.

But perhaps you don't have enough demand for gunsmithing services to bear the expense of allocating shop space, buying and maintaining shop equipment, and paying the salaries of people to staff the gunsmith operation. But you don't have to. Enloe has recognized that there are many retail gun stores that are in that situation but still have customers who need gunsmithing services. In response, he has created a program where retailers can offer high quality gunsmithing services to customers without having to make a significant investment.

Features and Benefits

As this is written, gun and ammunition sales are at all-time highs. People who have never owned a gun are showing up at stores all over the nation and buying up stock at unprecedented rates. But we all know that will not continue indefinitely. So, retailers must still compete, and to do that, smart retailers work to provide the products and

↑ Stocking a good selection of guns is only part of the equation. It takes a mix of both products and services to meet the needs of customers. Gunsmithing services have typically required extra space and staff, but that's not the case anymore.

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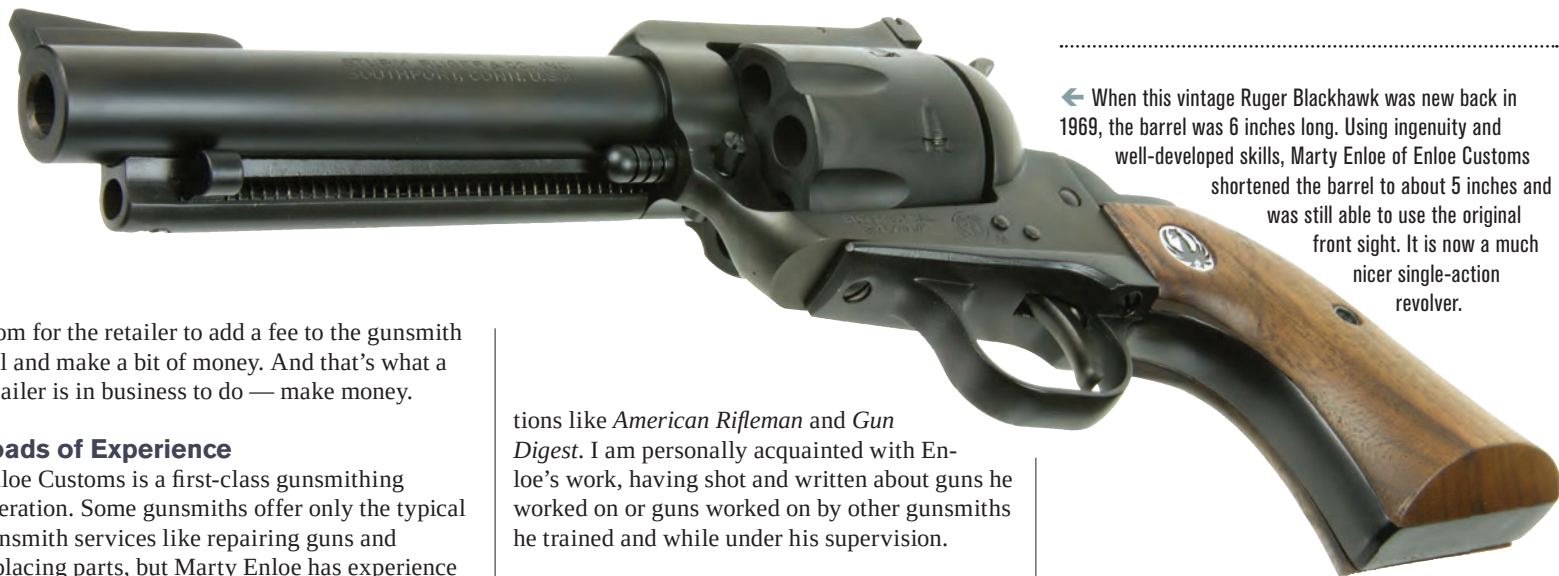
services that customers want.

Not all gun owners want the services of a gunsmith, and some never will. But many, especially after entering the gun owner world, discover that they can get features and benefits from gunsmiths that are not available with stock firearms. When they realize this, a retailer that offers gunsmith services has an advantage over the retailer that does not.

So Enloe Customs helps create that opportunity, even for a small retailer with no room for a gunsmith shop, or no money for the equipment and salary of a gunsmith. And, there are places in this country where even if the store owner was ready to hire a gunsmith, there just are not any to hire.

And Enloe offers a 15% discount on labor to retailers that use his program. So, there is a little





← When this vintage Ruger Blackhawk was new back in 1969, the barrel was 6 inches long. Using ingenuity and well-developed skills, Marty Enloe of Enloe Customs shortened the barrel to about 5 inches and was still able to use the original front sight. It is now a much nicer single-action revolver.

room for the retailer to add a fee to the gunsmith bill and make a bit of money. And that's what a retailer is in business to do — make money.

Loads of Experience

Enloe Customs is a first-class gunsmithing operation. Some gunsmiths offer only the typical gunsmith services like repairing guns and replacing parts, but Marty Enloe has experience that most gunsmiths lack so he offers much more.

After nearly two decades of gunsmithing, and being the head gunsmith at ROBAR, he has provided gunsmith services to members of the general public as well as law enforcement officers and agencies. Originally he was trained at Lassen Community College, which has a well respected gunsmith training program. When he left Lassen, he had a number of gunsmith skill certifications, but his training did not end there.

During his 19 years as a gunsmith, Enloe trained with experts who enjoy worldwide reputations. Those included Bill Laughridge of Cylinder & Slide and Ted Yost of Estate Sporting Limited. Yost not only is well known for custom firearm builds, but was the first gunsmith at the prestigious Gunsite Academy when it was owned and operated by Jeff Cooper.

And Enloe's work has been highlighted in many top nationally circulated firearms publica-

tions like *American Rifleman* and *Gun Digest*. I am personally acquainted with Enloe's work, having shot and written about guns he worked on or guns worked on by other gunsmiths he trained and while under his supervision.

Fine Examples

For example, under Enloe's supervision, a surplus Israeli service Mark II High Power was rebuilt and modernized. When the gun went to ROBAR, it was pretty rough with a scratched barrel and worn finish. It still functioned correctly, but had been heavily used. Every feature was as it was when it came from the Fabrique Nationale factory in 1985.

Modifications to the High Power included replacing the rudimentary iron sights with three-dot tritium night sights from Novak. This required that dovetails be cut into the slide. An extended beavertail was added to the gun and a custom Cylinder & Slide hammer was installed. A new barrel was also fitted to the gun. Additional trigger work was performed and a custom lanyard loop was fabricated. A new thumb safety was installed and the magazine disconnect was removed. The front strap was stippled and a complete refinish was applied. It turned out to be a superb firearm with

a major reduction in group size and a stunning appearance.

I am also very familiar with work performed by Enloe on an old Ruger Blackhawk that dates from the late 1960s. It was a well functioning gun, but the owner wanted the barrel length reduced from 6 inches to about 5. Enloe took on the job without hesitation, despite the Ruger reputation for having extremely tightly fitted barrels. It turned out that the barrel was so tight it couldn't be removed, so it required shortening and re-crowning while still attached to the frame.

Once the barrel was shortened, a new front sight had to be installed. In order to preserve as much of the original look and feel of the gun as possible, Enloe machined away the barrel below the old front sight. He then had to devise a way to securely attach the sight to the front of the



↑ Don't overlook the value in upgrading or customizing less popular guns, too, like a classic lever-action rifle.



→ Gunsmithing is a service that requires skill and training. A good gunsmith can handle a file with amazing results. Filing metal doesn't sound all that difficult, but finely detailed work is much harder than it looks.

shortened barrel. He did so by installing a pin in the barrel that mated with a hole in the front sight, and then screwed the front sight to the barrel. It is a stout installation and looks like it came from the factory. Finally, the gun was refinished.

Enloe also does excellent trigger work on revolvers and can reduce and smooth trigger pulls. I am aware of at least one Smith & Wesson Model 629 revolver on which he greatly improved the trigger.

Enloe has also smoothed the action and solved feeding problems with a Big Horn Armory Model 89 lever action carbine chambered in .500 S&W Magnum. While the gun would feed some cartridges, it would not feed others. It sounds like a simple problem to solve, but the Model 86 and 92 Winchesters on which the Big Horn Armory gun is modeled, were made to handle cartridges with different dimensions than the .500 S&W Magnum. So it took a great deal of fine work to make the gun function the way it should.

Enloe can build or customize an AR and is also fully capable of specialty work on bolt-action guns. Fabrication and accurizing are specialties. Enloe has a great deal of experience blueprinting, trueing and making sure that bolt guns have the correct dimensions. And building a 1911 from parts is another specialty. He can bed actions, replace barrels, hand cut checkering, tune extractors, serrate slides and do just about anything else having to do with guns.



↑ Enloe Custom Guns can build your customer a special AR-15 from select parts and add the special touches that make a great design even better.



Offering the Best

If your customer wants an expert to build that custom dream gun he's been thinking about for years, wants checkering cut on a rifle stock, or has something simpler in mind, Enloe wants to hear from you.

Even if your small store may be competing with larger stores in your area that have on-premises gunsmithing operations, chances are those shops do not offer services from a gunsmith

with Enloe's experience. You could offer top-of-the-line gunsmithing service from one of the best in the country. With shipping available overnight, and communications instantaneous, it's almost like having a nationally recognized gunsmith in your own back room.

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Contact Enloe Customs at 602-571-7010 or email Marty at Marty@EnloeCustomGuns.com. **HR**



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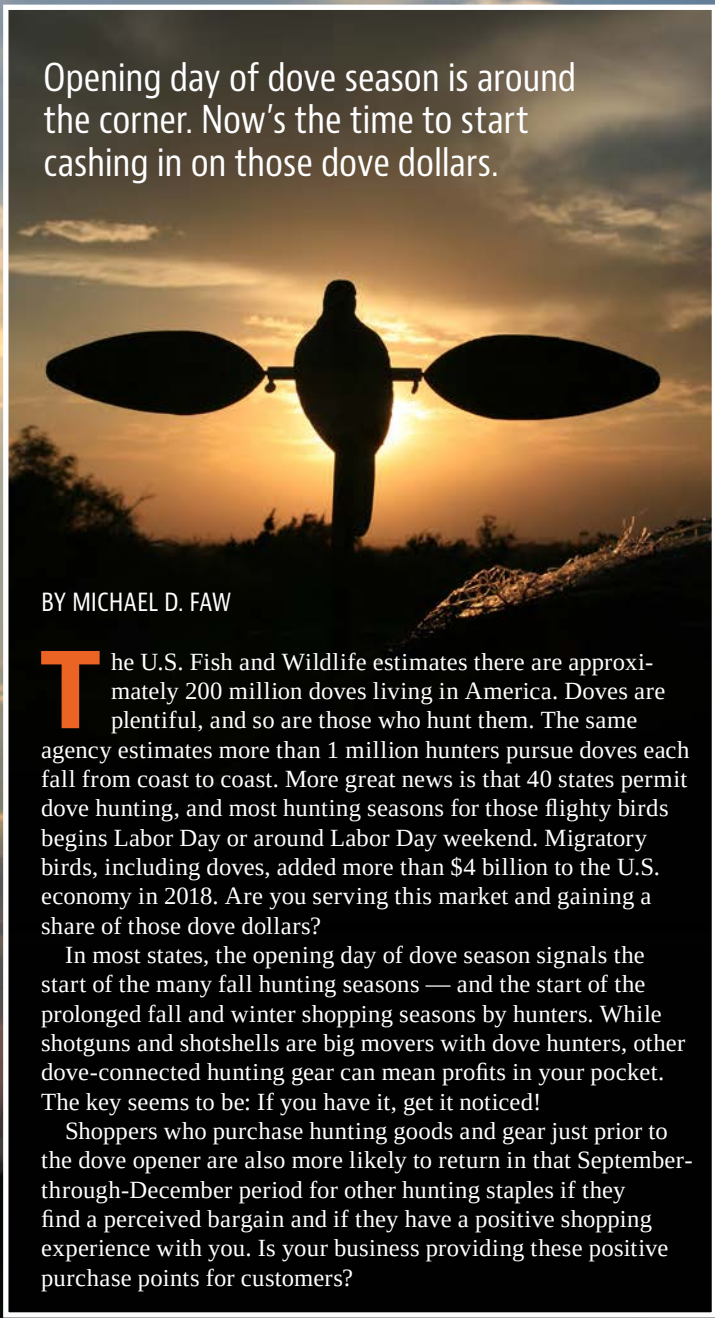


Doves
Are **Big**
Dollars





Opening day of dove season is around the corner. Now's the time to start cashing in on those dove dollars.



BY MICHAEL D. FAW

The U.S. Fish and Wildlife estimates there are approximately 200 million doves living in America. Doves are plentiful, and so are those who hunt them. The same agency estimates more than 1 million hunters pursue doves each fall from coast to coast. More great news is that 40 states permit dove hunting, and most hunting seasons for those flighty birds begins Labor Day or around Labor Day weekend. Migratory birds, including doves, added more than \$4 billion to the U.S. economy in 2018. Are you serving this market and gaining a share of those dove dollars?

In most states, the opening day of dove season signals the start of the many fall hunting seasons — and the start of the prolonged fall and winter shopping seasons by hunters. While shotguns and shotshells are big movers with dove hunters, other dove-connected hunting gear can mean profits in your pocket. The key seems to be: If you have it, get it noticed!

Shoppers who purchase hunting goods and gear just prior to the dove opener are also more likely to return in that September-through-December period for other hunting staples if they find a perceived bargain and if they have a positive shopping experience with you. Is your business providing these positive purchase points for customers?



The Big Market

While shotguns and shotshells are a starting point, there are other items that end up in the hands, pickup trucks, and open fields with dove hunters. These accessory items include but are not limited to: gun cases (hard and soft), camouflage clothing, footwear, dove decoys, folding seats and green or camouflage 5-gallon buckets with cushion tops, camouflage daypacks or field bags, coolers, open-top ground blinds or camouflage concealment panels, binoculars, plus a wide range of snacks and water bottles. Don't forget hunting gear for the many dogs that head afield with their dove-hunting owners. Dog gear can often be easier to sell than gear for humans!

That's a wide range of dove-connected hunting gear, but to increase shopping, you need to get 'em out and get 'em noticed. Creating a dove hunter display at or near the front of your store is



← Dove decoys are a strong accessory category, in addition to the obvious need – shotgun shells.



a starting point. Placing dove decoys around the entrance, around the store, and definitely in that display can grab shoppers' attention and build their excitement for the dove opener.

Another category of top sellers as dove season approaches are throwers and clay targets. Most hunters want to practice their shotgunning skills before the opener, and if they are inviting young or new hunters, they want to help them prepare. The throwers and targets could be among your top sellers if you work to call attention to the benefits of being a better shotgunner. Be certain to also stock shotgun chokes. Promote these with shoppers.

Finally, if you sell hunting licenses, broadcast this additional service. Not all hunters can buy a license online, and if you sell a hunter a license, they must open their wallet. It would also be beneficial and spur shopping to put out a huge sign noting it is X number of days until the dove opener.

As you can see, dove hunting can be a very gear-focused activity, which means many opportunities to engage hunters and generate shopping activity.

A Dove Sale Equals Dollars

After the deer-hunting seasons close in January or earlier, and the spring turkey-hunting season closes in late spring, hunter numbers visiting retail businesses can be very low or nonexistent. Having a big sale, pulling all the marketing strings, and spreading the word through multiple marketing channels can result in the return of hunters and many cash register rings. Success means offering a wide range of goods and getting ahead of the opening day. Dove-hunting sales can be much like opening a flood gate — the bigger the sale and specials, the more activity you generate.

Collecting those dove-hunting-centered dollars is greatly based on timing. Think and plan ahead.

You can make more sales if you start pushing merchandise and calling attention to dove season in mid-July to early August. These are often the slowest months for engaging your hunting customer base, so the more you can motivate that market to open your front door and their wallets, the more you can transform this sometimes slow shopping season into increased sales.

Since most dove hunters take more than a shotgun and box of shotshells afield with them, here's another market when packaging can equal greater sales. Simplify shopping for your customers by offering a package, such as a combo with dove decoys, a green or camouflage cooler, and a folding hunting seat. Another promo package could be buying a new shotgun and getting a free soft case, or if customers purchase a clay target thrower, they receive a free case of clay targets. Pricing to add value for the buyer and profits for you can definitely increase sales. When possible, add your business name and contact info to items like gun cases, coolers and seats. It's advertising that can reach many hunters in the field — and those could become shoppers.

One item more dove hunters are increasingly taking afield are decoys, for one simple reason: They work.

"The key to an effective dove decoy display is having something eye-catching and immediately accessible," says Stevie Barefield, Director of Marketing for MOJO Outdoors. "Dove decoys are such a seasonal item, and customers want to be able to quickly see the functionality, grab the decoy and go. A creative display at the entrance





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↑ Remember to promote practicing with dove hunters. This will increase sales of shotshells, shotguns, clay targets and the throwers needed.

of the store, like a tower or pyramid built from the product boxes along with a Dove Tree, Elite Series Dove, and Clip-On Doves displayed in the center, is a great way to accomplish this.” This is a great starting point with gear placed in displays, especially those in the front window or near the entrance. Be creative!

One other product needs your attention: shotguns. While most customers — and retailers — think only 12-gauge models when shotguns are dis-

cussed, the dove season is the period when those 20-, 28- and 16-gauge shotguns sell. Be prepared, stock plenty of sub-gauge shells, and promote these other gauges with your customers. Both older and beginning dove hunters normally seek shotguns that offer less recoil. Another item that can always be discussed with customers who purchase a shotgun or case of shells are the easy-to-open-and-use shotshell hard-polymer shotshell storage containers like those from Flambeau. Numerous hunters like not having to fight a small cardboard box to access shotshells when rushed but do like being able to quickly grab shotshells and load.

Reach Those Other Customers

While your regular dove-hunting customers are probably mostly adult males, there is another significant customer base associated with those dove hunting seasons — youth and female hunters. Often, your regular customers bring these additional customers with them as they shop. Other times, those new female customers come shopping unassisted. Be prepared to make contact with them and meet their needs. Listen closely to their requests and questions.

In case you have not heard, hunter numbers are growing again. Dove hunting opens the door for many youth and female hunters, who need items ranging from shotguns to clothing that properly fits. Smart dads, moms, uncles, grandparents, cousins and friends who will be taking these new hunters on their first visit to a dove field (plus savvy retailers) know properly fitting clothing and shotguns can mean the beginning of a lifetime of hunt-



← Dove hunters can be found from coast to coast in America and in 40 states. Are you cashing in?

ing adventures for those new hunters — or, unfortunately, their last hunting trip when things falter.

Stock and offer the products for this new hunter market segment. Reaching these customers often means promoting your store and the goods inside through new channels, such as websites and social media networks. Put youth clothing in displays and advertising. Get it noticed. Offering merchandise geared to new hunters can put you ahead — far ahead — of your competition who only serves middle-age male hunters.

Along with selling hunting licenses, there is another key item dove hunters need: information. Help customers get engaged for the hunt and post information in the store about legal shooting hours, bag and daily limits, public hunting areas nearby, transporting firearms legally, and other details. A step further is to put this information on the back of a printed sales circular that also showcases the shotguns and dove gear you have on sale. You simply stuff that sheet into customer's bags or place it into their hands if they ask about, or mention, dove hunting. Many shoppers begin thinking about this key season the month(s) before Labor Day, so plan ahead and stock up. If your ordered merchandise only arrives, or is placed on shelves, the week ahead, or week after, Labor Day, you have missed sales and income.

Doves are dollars. Focusing on this market share provides many benefits for you — and your customers. **HR**

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Knife Sales Can Give You an Edge

Selling knives and multi-tools is a natural fit for sporting goods stores, and your customers will extend beyond just hunters.





BY MATT CRAWFORD

Inside the store at Mark's Outdoors in Vestavia, Alabama, there's a small piece of retail real estate that packs a big punch. It's the knife counter.

"Our knife sales make up eight percent of our total amount of sales," said Mark Whitlock, Jr., who manages the shop. "We have a massive knife display, but still the product display only takes up about 100 square feet. On a per-square-foot basis in a store that's 25,000 square feet, our knife sales are by far the most profitable part of our business."

Savvy retailers like Mark's Outdoors who know how and make a concentrated effort to sell knives will reinforce what Whitlock sees at his shop on the outskirts of Birmingham. With healthy margins, deep and strong product lines from top brands and increasing consumer demand, knives represent significant potential for increased sales.

While knives don't take a lot of space to display or store, they do require a certain level of background knowledge to sell correctly. You don't have to be an expert in metallurgy (a scientist with expertise in metals) or a mechanical engineer, but a little bit of expertise can go a long way.

While this won't provide everything you need to know about selling knives, here's a quick primer for those who want to use knives as one way to increase their stores' profit margins.



Carry a Couple of Brands

Ask any hunter what their first knife was and you're likely to hear the name "Buck." Headquartered in Post Falls, Idaho, Buck Knives has been around since 1802 and is still a dominant brand in the hunting space. Hunting remains core to Buck's business, and Buck makes reasonably priced, time-tested knives. But with so many advances in locking mechanism technologies, steels and sheaths, a successful retailer would be wise to have more than one brand on its shelves.



↑ Exchangeable-blade knives are popular, as they're extremely easy to keep sharp – when the blade dulls, just insert a new one.

Havalon Knives and Outdoor Edge are also well-known hunting-specific brands. Both make precise boning and caping tools for hunters and offer models with gut hooks (some people love them) and without (others hate them).

Other solid knife brands that can add depth and breadth to your knife offerings include Benchmade, CRKT, SOG, Spyderco, Kershaw, Opinel and Gerber. Bringing in one of the bigger brands allows you to put together a lineup that's deeper than just hunting knives, which leads us to the next point.

Not Just Knives, Not Just Hunters

As you're likely aware, specific types of outdoor gear sold extraordinarily well during the COVID-19 epidemic. Knives were no exception, but it wasn't just hunting knives. Everyday carry (EDC) or daily carry knives found legions of new fans who discovered that they needed to be prepared in the event the worst-case scenario finally hit the fan.

What's loosely referred to as the "concealed carry market" was a \$12.9-billion-a-year industry in 2017, according to one research report and growing at about a 3 percent clip per year. That trajectory has increased since COVID.

In 2018, the National Shooting Sports Foundation published a report on the consumer knife market. Among the highlights: "Although you don't need a knife to own and



↑ Hunters won't be your only knife customers. Even simple, inexpensive pocketknives have a market.

use firearms and vice versa, there appears to be a strong, if not symbiotic, relationship between the two," said the NSSF report. It was shown in the "Concealed Carry Market – NSSF Report 2018" that more than 75 percent of those who carry a firearm also carry a knife for self-defense.

If you're selling guns, ammo or shooting accessories, it's pretty clear your customers are also buying knives. And multi-tools.

Beyond the Blade

If you're selling knives from brands like Gerber, SOG, CRKT or Victorinox, chances are high your sales rep has tried to talk you into carrying multi-tools from those brands. And you know what? Your sales rep is right.

While multi-tool sales are dwarfed by the massive knife industry, the multi-tool (essentially invented by market leader Leatherman in 1983) presents plenty of opportunity to sell products right around that \$100 range. They're used by outdoor enthusiasts of all types, from hunters to hikers, and there should be at least a couple of choices of multi-tools in your knife counter.

Steels...in General

For a tool that is so integral to hunting and fishing, knives are surrounded by a lot of mystery. Among the most byzantine components of the knife world is blade steel. The internet is full of bulletin boards and chatrooms with never-ending posts about the pros and cons of hundreds of specific steels. Adding to the confusion, knife manufacturers use an ever-changing lineup of steel materials, some exotic and unique, some no more fancy than the stainless steel table knife you use to butter a roll.

In reality, you need only be familiar with a few basic knife steels for field dressing, skinning, boning, caping an animal or filleting a fish. Think of it this way: Each steel has a purpose in the same way that each golf club has a specific





↑ Knives purpose-built for skinning chores will appeal to hunters. Be sure to stock sharpeners as well.

purpose. If you're a chef, your needs are different than a hunter. Here's a set of general guidelines regarding choosing the right knife steel for the hunting season.

When you're choosing a knife, the most important thing to do is figure out the performance needs you have using edge retention, blade toughness, corrosion resistance and ease of sharpening as your guidelines.

On top of that, hunters should layer on these factors when choosing a knife: the type of game being hunted, the duration the knife will be used without proper maintenance, the environment in which hunting will take place, and the budget set aside for a knife purchase.

What does that mean for steel? Generally, blade steel falls into one of two categories: high-carbon and stainless. Stainless resists rust and corrosion, but it doesn't hold an edge long. High-carbon is susceptible to corrosion, but it's easier to sharpen and keeps an edge.

A steel like AUS-8, which is pretty common in the knife

“For hunters, there's no need to find something exotic. Pick a mainstream steel that sharpens with relative ease and holds an edge pretty well.”

industry, is a decent all-around choice for hunters. AUS-8 isn't a particularly expensive or exotic steel, which is just fine for somebody who uses it just a couple of weeks a year.

A step up from AUS-8 is D2 steel, one of the most ubiquitous steels in the knife industry. D2 holds an edge well and is easy to sharpen. It's not super corrosion-resistant, so it does require a bit more additional care, like adding oil after it's cleaned.

An even higher-end steel found in a number of well-known hunting knives is S30V or S35V. The steels in the S30 family are harder to sharpen, but they hold their edges longer.

It's easy to get analysis paralysis wading your way through blade steels. For hunters, there's no need to find something exotic. Pick a mainstream steel that sharpens with relative ease and holds an edge pretty well.

One Selling Tip

What's the best way for a retailer to relay the features and benefits of a good knife for customers who walk through the door?

Let's let Steve Shackelford, editor of *Blade Magazine*, take that one. After all, Shackelford has probably opened, closed and cut with more knives than most of us have seen in a lifetime.

“I'd become a knife model,” said Shackelford. “I'd pick the knife up and show it to the customer from all angles — both sides, the spines, the undercarriage, etc. If it's a folder, I'd open and close it repeatedly but safely to show how smooth the action is. If it's a fixed blade and it has a sheath, I would sheath and resheath the knife slowly and safely, and also show any features the sheath might have, such as a snap or Velcro closure, belt loop, drain hole, etc.”

For last, he said, he'd demo how well the knife cuts.

“For that I'd simply get a piece of stationery and slice it repeatedly,” he said. “If you're brave, you could use a newspaper — if anyone buys one anymore — or even cigarette rolling papers. The latter take a lot of chutzpah, so you'd better be sure that blade is razor-sharp.” **HR**



↑ Some hunters will be looking for gut hooks, bone saws, tree trimmers and other speciality items. Stock them all.



BY GORDY KRAHN

HUNTING RETAILER GEAR ROUNDUP BIG-GAME AMMUNITION

Only when your customers stuff their favorite hunting rifle full of the best premium ammunition they can get their hands on will they reap the full benefits of its accuracy and terminal performance potential.

During these ammunition-challenged times, it has never been more important to provide your customers with quality cartridges to top off their cherished firearms. This requires forethought and planning as ammo companies struggle to keep up with demand. And since modern big-game hunters are specialists in that they have a wide variety of preferences when it comes to the types of guns they shoot and the bullets they feed them, the challenge is to stock as many as possible – again, difficult during these trying times. Here are a dozen choices that will have your patrons grinning from ear to ear.



ARMSCOR .308 WIN. 165-GRAIN ACCUBOND

With a muzzle velocity of 2,500 fps, Armscor's 165-grain .308 Win. AccuBond offering (\$51.84/box of 20) is a great choice for a wide variety of big-game hunting applications. Through an exclusive bonding process that eliminates voids in the bullet core, AccuBond couples Nosler's proven copper-alloy jacket with its special lead-alloy core. The result is a bullet that flies true, penetrates deep and retains its weight without causing extensive barrel fouling. Its unique white polymer tip resists deformation and initiates expansion on impact. Nosler's Solid Base at the rear of the bullet acts as a platform for large diameter mushrooms. Arscor offers a wide selection of competitively priced ammunition and components for shooters who demand precise and dependable performance. www.armscor.com

DRT .308 135-GRAIN TERMINAL SHOCK

Dynamic Research Technologies' .308 Win. 135-grain Terminal Shock ammo (\$39.09/box of 20) utilizes the same powder core technology as its other Terminal Shock rounds, but with less cost to the consumer. The core is made up of a less expensive material, copper, but sacrifices very little when it comes to performance. The 135-grain bullet is very accurate but has a lower BC (ballistic coefficient) due to its length and lower SD (sectional density). DRT's .30-caliber bullets are a great choice for hunting moose, bears, elk, deer and hog-sized game animals – delivering high performance at mid- to long-range with a muzzle velocity of 2,850 fps and 2,335 ft./lbs. of muzzle energy. www.drtaammo.com

FEDERAL LEVER ACTION HAMMERDOWN

Federal Premium's HammerDown hunting ammunition (\$25.99-\$61.99/box of 20) is designed for optimal cycling and overall operation in the time-tested lever-action rifle platform – providing the velocity and terminal performance required for effectively taking down medium-size and big game with traditional handgun cartridges such as .357 Mag., .327 Federal and .44 Rem. Mag. Designed for optimal performance in tube feed as well as side gate firearms, its modified case geometry eliminates feeding issues. HammerDown velocities are customized to produce superior ballistics and terminal performance through lever-action barrel lengths, and the construction of its molecularly bonded soft-point bullets has also been adjusted for the best accuracy and expansion at those velocities. HammerDown is available in the most popular lever-action cartridges. www.federalpremium.com





FORT SCOTT MUNITIONS .308 SCS TUI BRUSH HOG

Fort Scott Munitions .308 TUI Brush Hog ammo (\$48.74/box of 20) features a solid copper match-grade bullet engineered to tumble upon impact to provide devastating stopping power and is precision machined and loaded with the utmost care within tight tolerances for dependable accuracy. Upon entry into soft tissue, the TUI projectile begins to tumble, causing a high degree of energy transfer and massive internal damage. And hunters can enjoy the freedom to pursue wild hogs, deer and black bears with these solid copper-spun bullets where lead ammo is prohibited. With its tumble-upon-impact technology, Brush Hog ammunition is also a good choice for personal and home defense.
www.fortscottmunitions.com



GRIZZLY CARTRIDGE .300 WIN. MAG.

When it comes to magnum rifle cartridges, there aren't many that match the versatility of the .300 Win. Mag., and Grizzly Cartridge has three new loads (\$44.99-\$69.99/box of 20) for a wide variety of hunting situations. The Grizzly 180-grain Nosler AccuBond Spitzer leaves the barrel at 3,200 fps and is a great option for hunting elk, deer and other big-bodied game – its bonded-core, soft-point bullet retaining much of its weight on impact. Looking for a little more velocity? Grizzly's 165-grain and 150-grain offerings – 3,275 and 3,350 fps respectively – produce stellar long-range hunting performance. Each round is carefully loaded in the USA under the strictest guidelines.
www.grizzlycartridge.com



HORNADY DANGEROUS GAME SERIES

From InterLock SP-RP to heavy-hitting DGS and DGX bullets, each Dangerous Game series load from Hornady (\$96.99-\$179.99/box of 20) is topped with a deadly projectile designed for optimum terminal performance. The Interlock Spire Point-Recoil Proof bullet is designed to eliminate the problem of tip deformation for improved accuracy and trajectory. The DGS non-expanding bullet's tough copper clad steel jacket provides maximum penetration from all angles on thick-skinned and heavy-boned dangerous game animals. DGX Bonded bullets are built to the same profile as the corresponding DGS bullets but expand to 1.5 to 2 times their diameter. They feature a copper-clad steel jacket bonded to a lead core to provide limited, controlled expansion with deep penetration and high weight retention.
www.hornady.com



HSM 6.5MM CREEDMOOR LOW RECOIL

Considering the plethora of MSRs now chambered for the popular 6.5 Creedmoor cartridge, HSM Ammunition has engineered a 6.5mm Creedmoor Low Recoil variant (\$37.99/box of 20) that reduces felt recoil by 47 percent – perfect for recoil-sensitive shooters. It features standard weight-for-caliber 140-grain bullets with no compromise on impact, expansion or weight retention. To attain this, HSM partnered with a world-renowned bullet manufacturer in developing this proprietary bullet, with a distinct HSM orange ballistic tip. Premium cases and primers combined with a “secret” blend of temperature-tolerant powders drives those bullets to a muzzle velocity of 2,335 fps and generates 1,695 foot-pounds of energy for peak performance out to 250 yards. Low Recoil ammo is available in six other big-game cartridges.
www.hsmammunition.com



NEXUS AMMUNITION .300 WIN. MAG. MATCH GRADE

Adopted as a favorite by a wide range of hunters, target shooters and LE/MIL snipers, the .300 Win. Mag. is an extremely versatile long-range cartridge, capable of anchoring any big-game species on the North American continent (\$57.99/box of 20; \$579.90/case). The Nexus Ammunition Match Grade .300 Win. Mag. 220-grain cartridge utilizes Sierra's Match King HPBT projectile and is optimized for medium- to long-range shooting in the wide array of hunting rifles that chamber this popular cartridge. With a ballistic coefficient of 0.629, it generates a muzzle velocity of 2,870 fps and 3,709 ft./lbs. of energy.
www.nexusammo.com



SIERRA 6.5 CREEDMOOR GAMECHANGER

Sierra has expanded its popular GameChanger ammunition lineup with the addition of the 6.5 Creedmoor (\$44.99/box of 20) topped with its 140-grain Sierra GameChanger bullet – delivering top-shelf accuracy and bone-punching terminal performance, all packed in a precisely tuned cartridge. Sierra's GameChanger ammunition is the result of more than 70 years of designing world-class bullets. Each GameChanger round utilizes the new Gamechanger bullet design that incorporates features from other types of Sierra bullets, resulting in a unique and enhanced product. It features a synthetic tip to maximize ballistic coefficient and increased jacket wall thickness to ensure deep penetration. This special bullet style gives users a true all-purpose bullet design for a wide application of hunting situations.
www.sierrabullets.com





SIG SAUER SUBSONIC .300 BLK TIPPED

Sig Sauer's subsonic .300 BLK ammunition (\$34.95/box of 20) features a yellow-tipped, 205-grain lead-core bullet designed for explosive expansion and exceptional accuracy – using the same single-base extruded powders as Sig Match Grade rounds, ensuring consistent muzzle velocity and insensitivity to temperature change. Optimized for the AR-15 platform, .300 BLK Tipped Hunting ammunition is engineered to allow hunters to load 30 rounds in a 30-round magazine and have the cartridges feed properly using a stepped-down bullet design with a shouldered ogive that keeps bullets from hitting the ridges of the magazine. This load is ideal for use with a suppressor, greatly reducing sound signature and muzzle flash. Muzzle velocity is 1,000 fps and muzzle energy is 455 ft./lbs. from a 16-inch barrel. www.sigsauger.com/ammunition



WEATHERBY 6.5 WBYP RPM

Weatherby's 6.5 WBYP RPM cartridge (\$59-\$79/box of 20) is based on a lengthened version of the .284 Winchester. It has a rebated rim, making it compatible with standard .30-06 bolt faces and reloading equipment. However, the large body diameter, low body taper and 35-degree shoulder mean that case capacity is greatly increased, leading to higher velocities. In addition, bullet innovation in the 6.5mm category is highly efficient, with less drop and wind deflection than many heavier calibers. All of these details culminate into an accurate cartridge that delivers 1,500 ft./lbs. of energy at 500 yards. The Weatherby 6.5 WBYP RPM comes in three bullet choices – 127-grain Barnes LRX, 140-grain Nosler Accubond and 140-grain Hornady Interloc. www.weatherby.com



WINCHESTER/BROWNING 6.8 WESTERN

Winchester Ammo and Browning have teamed up to introduce the 6.8 Western, a long-range hunting and shooting cartridge offering magnum performance with a modern high-BC projectile chambered in a short-action rifle for a shorter bolt-throw and reduced weight (\$38.99/box of 20). The 6.8 Western was designed from the ground up as a long-range cartridge capable of excelling in any big-game hunting situation and a great fit for marksmen who enjoy long-range target shooting. With heavier bullet weights than the 6.5 Creedmoor, 6.5 PRC and .270 WSM, it provides highly effective downrange energy, even at longer ranges – more than the 6.5 Creedmoor, 6.5 PRC and 7mm Rem. Mag. with less recoil than the .300 WSM, .300 Win. Mag. and .300 PRC. www.winchester.com/www.browning.com



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Engage to Expand: 4 Tips to Increase Waterfowl Sales

Trying to hit the duck- and goose-hunter market? Here's how.



BY SETH DORTCH

As a firearms retailer, you need to engage if you want to expand. When it comes to waterfowl sales, the success of your business will be contingent on how intentional you are in learning what waterfowlers are looking for — rather than focusing on sales efforts independent of them. If increasing waterfowl sales is the ultimate goal, engaging with those customers represents the best mode of action.

A hallmark of today's customer is he or she no longer wants to be sold to. They're weary of having product and sales campaigns pushed down their throat because they don't want to be valued as numbers, but as people, and the brands and retailers thriving today are the ones who portray their humanity in their marketing and branding. It's impossible to expand a relationship without first engaging with them where they are — be it online or in-store. So let's use this as a base while we explore four tangible ways to boost waterfowl sales.

1. Entertain, Educate and Inspire

If you're looking to connect with your customer base, it's crucial your store

excels in these three areas. Barton Ramsey, owner of Southern Oak Kennels (Okolona, Mississippi) and founding partner of Cornerstone Gundog Academy, shared how all three components are connected: "To have one and not the others leaves a gap in the connection you could have with consumers and also the connection the consumer desires to have with your brand."

This is an important consideration for social media strategy. On every social platform (Facebook, Instagram, Twitter, etc.) there are hundreds of thousands of posts and ads seeking to grab the attention and trigger the decision-making of the user. The question must be asked (and it must be asked by you, your management team and employees): "What do waterfowlers need, and are we meeting it?"

There's power in doing what you can with what you have. There's power in embracing your authenticity, because no one else can be you and operate the way your business does. Entertain customers with content and product that connects with their passions. Educate them with content that enables them to have more success at what they're seeking to do. In essence, make their success your success.

Inspire customers with content that piques their interests. We can be enter-

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tained and have all the education we'd ever want, but if we aren't inspired to put our ambition into action — it doesn't go anywhere. Customer testimonials, encouragement and helping the customer connect their senses with their experiences are great ways to ignite their ambition. Embrace these three principles and use them as guidelines for social media strategy.

2. Stock Right, Move Product

As straightforward as “stock right, move product” sounds, there's a lot that goes into realizing it. Every management team has a wide range of opinions — which means there are a lot of different approaches to what looks good and feels good and which brands are best, and you need a sense for the overall trends of the waterfowl market. Successful stores focus on what their customers are asking for rather than making unilateral decisions. If the phrase “I thought that would sell pretty good” is ever uttered in your store, it's generally the result of a product being selected by a staff member's personal preferences rather than by those who are buying/using product.

When asked about stocking the right inventory, Final Flight Outfitters (Union City, Tennessee) Sales Manager Devin Cranford advises: “Retailers must be quick to listen and intentional about embracing what customers have to share. It's important to take that overall information to understand in-demand trends and preferences.”

Cranford shared several of the leading brands stocked by Final Flight. “Some of the top waterfowling brands we keep in stock not only have beneficial dealer programs, but also really resonate with our customers: Higdon Outdoors, Rig 'Em Right, Sitka Gear, Power Calls, Duck Commander and Lucky Duck,” he said. “These are just a few of the many brands we carry at Final Flight that really care for us as a retailer, as we pursue the ambition of helping our customers be successful.”

In shotguns, the store maintains a healthy inventory of both new and used options from numerous manufacturers, including Benelli, Winchester, Stoeger, Franchi, Browning and Beretta.

3. Capitalize on Collaborations

Forging relationships with others who do things you aren't doing can result in growth of branding and profit — for both parties. On the reverse, it's possible you're doing something they aren't and can provide resources they don't have. Take time to have a conversation with local/regional dog trainers, guide services, conservation organizations, etc., and explore how collaboration would be mutually beneficial.

J.P. Hewitt, owner of The Gadget Company, an independent retailer in Tulsa, Oklahoma, shared how crucial this has been for his store over its 30-plus years in business. “We've engaged in a partnership with FowlCo Outfitters, which gives us credibility with waterfowl hunters of having the knowledge from field experience to provide our customers with product and hunting strategy,” he said. (FowlCo Outfitters is Oklahoma's premier waterfowl hunting lodge based in Garber — about 110 miles from Hewitt's storefront.)

It is also wise to invest time with manufacturers and buy groups. Catherine Rash, Nation's Best Sports (NBS) marketing manager, shared how this 350-member buy group embodies the “strength in numbers” mantra.

“NBS continuously encourages members to connect and network with



each other regularly because we know they truly are stronger together,” she said. “The collective buying power of a buy group is what initially attracts independent retailers, but the intangibles our members receive from the relationships they build with other retailers benefit tremendously over time.”

If you're a member of a buy group and not currently connecting with your peers, you're both likely missing out on opportunities. Buy groups have resources, market power and the ambition to help members grow their presence and influence among the waterfowl space. Doing this will help all involved, because collaborations enhance potential.

4. Be Engaged

Engaging without a clear purpose is like shooting at a duck in the air while aiming at the water. Unfortunately, it's a strategy too often employed by retailers in the waterfowl industry. Retailers with the mindset to intentionally engage and focus on

others will find success follows naturally/

If there's one takeaway here for you to share with your team, it's this: be intentional about engaging with waterfowlers and meeting them where they're at to expand sales. **HR**



BY GORDY KRAHN

HUNTING RETAILER NEW PRODUCTS



EXCALIBUR TWINSTRIKE CROSSBOW

Excalibur's new TwinStrike with DualFire technology is the first crossbow designed to fire two arrows within a split-second of each other. In the event of a miss, it provides a quick follow-up shot without the need to reload. At the heart of the TwinStrike is Excalibur's DualFire technology and its three key components: two independent match-grade 4-pound frictionless triggers, CeaseFire technology that prevents firing unless an arrow is loaded and an over/under rail system that is engineered to provide double arrow accuracy. The TwinStrike not only gives bowhunters an instant second shot but produces a blazing fast arrow speed of 360 fps in a balanced and ultra-compact crossbow. The package includes Excalibur's new Rebolt quiver and Overwatch scope. **MSRP: \$2,222.22** www.excaliburcrossbow.com

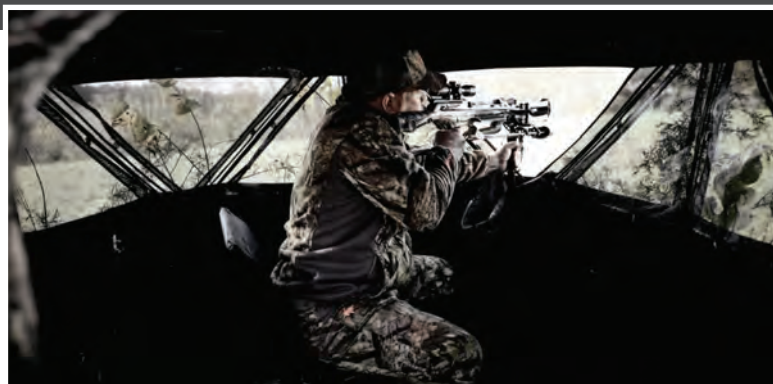


SENTRY SOLUTIONS TUF-CLOTH

The Sentry original 12x12-inch lint-free Tuf-Cloth comes in a resealable pouch and works as an all-in-one CDLP cleaner, dry lubricant and protectant. This go-to cloth will literally provide years of use. Keep one in the range bag, the gun locker and glove compartment. After a day on the range or in the field, simply wipe guns off and stow them away. Unlike traditional cleaners and lubricants, the CDLP cleaner in the cloth wipes away dirt and fingerprints and leaves behind a micro-bonding shield, leaving a protected surface that does not attract and hold debris. Performance, reliability and accuracy are enhanced, and cleaning becomes as simple as brushing off the firearm surface and re-wiping. **MSRP: \$9.99** www.sentrytactical.com

HAWK OFFICE BOX BLIND

Built to last, the Hawk Office box blind provides hunters with comfort and reliability – featuring insulated interior and exterior steel surfaces as well as an insulated powder-coated steel floor. It measures 6-feet square by 6.5-feet tall and ships fully assembled with an ultra-dark black interior, preventing shadows and allowing hunters to move without being detected. Oversized horizontal windows along with the vertical windows are equipped with eaves to help keep hunters dry, even in the most adverse weather conditions and allow bowhunters to shoot out of any window. A full-frame RV-style door is equipped with a handle and secure lock. Five- and 10-foot tower bases are available and can be purchased separately. **MSRP: \$3,999.99** www.hawkhunting.com



AMERISTEP EXTREME VIEW BLIND

The new Ameristep Pro Series Extreme View portable blind solves blind spot problems without sacrificing concealment using one-way, see-through mesh for an unobstructed view without silhouetting the hunter. Twelve mesh windows and 270 degrees of visibility provide more shot opportunities and its pentagon shaped interior has a 37 percent larger footprint than most similar-sized blinds. Archery hunters will love having the space to draw and hold while shifting angles to get the perfect shot. The blind also features a full-size door that makes entry and exit quiet and easy, and the windows have silent slide adjustments for opening quietly when needed. The Extreme View blind comes in Mossy Oak Country DNA camouflage with brush straps to add foliage for texture. **MSRP: \$219.99** www.ameristep.com



SETH MCGINN'S GAMEMAKER EZ JERKY SHOOTER

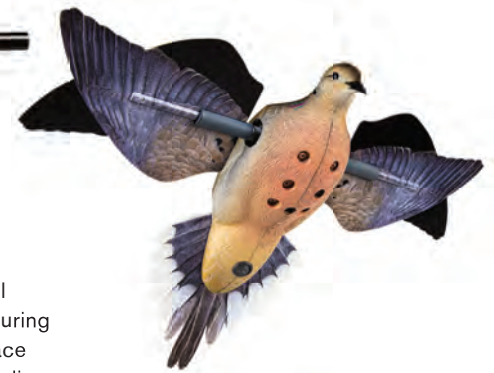
The easy-to-use dishwasher safe EZ Jerky Shooter makes delicious jerky and snack sticks from lean ground wild game such as bison, elk, deer, waterfowl and turkey. Simply mix 1 pound of ground meat with a favorite jerky cure or seasoning, place the meat in the barrel of the jerky gun, select a nozzle, shoot the jerky strips onto a baking sheet or a dehydrator rack and get cooking. The commercial-grade Jerky Gun comes with a Snap-Lok EZ fill tube, round nozzle, flat nozzle, dual-flat nozzle and a heavy-duty stainless steel torsion system. Make jerky by the pound with the EZ Jerky Shooter from Seth McGinn's GameMaker. **MSRP: \$39.99** www.cancooker.com





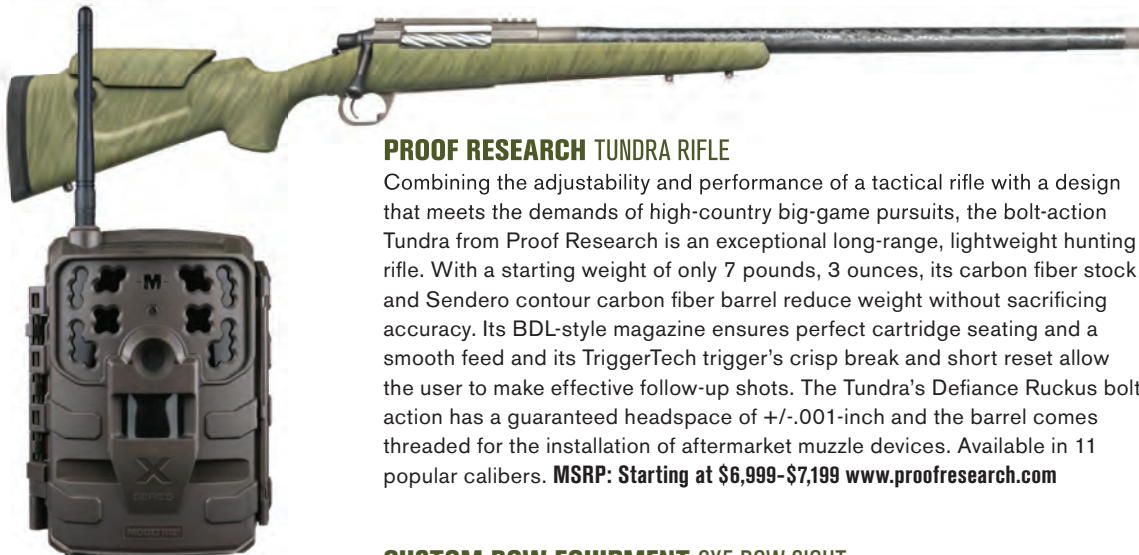
CZ-USA 557 ECLIPSE BOLT-ACTION RIFLE

The 557 Eclipse bolt-action rifle from CZ-USA retains the original 557's American-pattern stock with a strong pistol grip, slight palm swell and high, flat comb. It's mated to a cold hammer-forged and lapped 20.5-inch CZ barrel, ensuring unparalleled accuracy and a long shooting life. Its black glass-reinforced polymer stock features a Soft Touch surface finish that will stand up to harsh weather conditions and rough treatment while providing a non-slip grip. The 557 Eclipse is available chambered in several of today's most popular hunting cartridges, including .308 Win., .30-06 Sprg. and 6.5 Creedmoor. The 6.5 Creedmoor version includes a threaded barrel to accommodate a suppressor or muzzle brake. The rifle has a hinged floorplate and a five-round internal magazine. **MSRP: \$659** www.cz-usa.com



AVIAN-X POWERFLIGHT DOVE DECOYS

New for 2021, the Avian-X PowerFlight Dove decoy pairs a natural paint scheme and posture with an innovative 360-degree motion wing to mimic a real fluttering dove. Its durable design and water-resistant housing protect the battery and motor and the decoy runs for up to 16 hours using AA batteries. The non-chip paint scheme and durable construction will stand up to many seasons of demanding field use. The PowerFlight Dove includes a unique stake with two mounting options: on top of the stake for a stationary setup or a specially designed arm for natural wind movement. The stake is also designed to hold two PowerFlight Doves, one positioned on top and the other placed on the arm. **MSRP: \$54.99** www.avianx.com



PROOF RESEARCH TUNDRA RIFLE

Combining the adjustability and performance of a tactical rifle with a design that meets the demands of high-country big-game pursuits, the bolt-action Tundra from Proof Research is an exceptional long-range, lightweight hunting rifle. With a starting weight of only 7 pounds, 3 ounces, its carbon fiber stock and Sendero contour carbon fiber barrel reduce weight without sacrificing accuracy. Its BDL-style magazine ensures perfect cartridge seating and a smooth feed and its TriggerTech trigger's crisp break and short reset allow the user to make effective follow-up shots. The Tundra's Defiance Ruckus bolt action has a guaranteed headspace of +/- .001-inch and the barrel comes threaded for the installation of aftermarket muzzle devices. Available in 11 popular calibers. **MSRP: Starting at \$6,999-\$7,199** www.proofresearch.com

MOULTRIE DELTA CELLULAR TRAIL CAMERA

The new Moultrie Mobile Delta cellular trail camera is loaded with advanced features for premium performance in the field and workhorse reliability all season long. High Dynamic Range (HDR) imaging combined with 32 MP resolution allows the Delta to capture enhanced detail in highlights and shadows – even in the most difficult lighting conditions. The camera's Illumi-Night 3 sensor delivers images and video with vivid colors by day and crisp, bright clarity at night with invisible infrared flash. The camera is also equipped with onboard GPS for theft deterrence and easy device location on the map within the Moultrie Mobile app. It has a battery life of up to 12 months on a single set of lithium batteries. **MSRP: \$99.99** www.moultriemobile.com

CUSTOM BOW EQUIPMENT CX5 BOW SIGHT

Weighing less than 9 ounces, the CX5 ultra-light bow sight from Custom Bow Equipment features an extension bar made from high-modulus carbon that not only keeps the sight extremely lightweight but also ultra-stiff. Its dovetail mounting brackets, adjustment rails and scope housing are all machined aluminum for added durability. The sight's five .019 blade-style pins feature 12 inches of fiber optic per pin and an included rheostat light. Micro adjustable and multiple mounting positions for elevation and windage make sighting-in easier than ever. Fully ambidextrous, the CX5 also comes with four different color peep alignment rings to easily customize the sight for specific needs. **MSRP: \$169.99** www.custombowequipment.com



WRC PRO-DRAG/TRAILS END #307 COMBO

Wildlife Research Center has paired Trail's End #307 buck lure with its high performance Pro-Drag scent dispenser for easy and effective application. The Pro-Drag is made with a special synthetic felt for maximum scent absorption and dispersal. It will not react with and change the scent and is designed with tails that easily dip into the scent bottle without making a mess. Super Charged Trails End #307 with Scent Reflex technology contains doe urine with estrus secretions and at the same time incorporates additional strong attraction qualities to pique the interest of passing bucks. The combo includes a 1 fluid ounce bottle of Trails End #307, two Pro-Drag scent dispensers and one drag rope. **MSRP: \$12.99** www.wildlife.com



Scent Wars

The fight over selling deer urine is heating up. How will it affect your store and your customers?

BY BOB ROBB

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a contagious neurological disease that slowly kills every deer, elk or other cervid it infects, poses a serious threat to ungulate populations throughout North America. To date, it's been identified in 26 states and four Canadian provinces. To their credit, state wildlife agencies have responded to this threat by taking serious steps to try to stop its spread. One of those steps by some states has been banning the use of one of the most popular and effective centuries-old hunting techniques — the use of scents taken from live deer.

“CWD is a growing concern,” said Sam Burgeson, president of Wildlife Research Center, makers of the popular urine-based Golden Estrus line of attractant scents and Scent Killer scent-eliminating products, among others. Burgeson is also the first president of the newly-formed Responsible Hunting Scent Association (*ResponsibleScents.com*). “Wildlife agencies are under great pressure to take action towards stopping the spread of this disease, such as population management, carcass transport restrictions, live deer movement restrictions, and unfortunately, in some cases, less scientifically-supported measures,” he continued.

With CWD a growing concern among both scientists and sportsmen, and the feeling by some that the use of urine-based scent products might pose the threat of bringing CWD

to areas where it heretofore has not been found, what's the future hold for the scent industry, and for the millions of hunters who depend on these products annually?

When questions about urine and CWD first surfaced, several prominent hunting scent companies began reaching out to leading experts and researchers for answers. Even though the use of urine in hunting scents has been shown to pose almost no risk of CWD, manufacturers collectively embraced the science and continued to pursue ways to make their products even safer.

“With the help of the Archery Trade Association (www.archery-trade.org), our industry worked with wildlife agencies, disease experts, and industry experts to develop the ATA Deer Protection Program (DPP) — a robust certification program, launched in March 2016 — to bring their practices to an even higher level,” Burgeson said. “This program requires increased monitoring, inspections, closed herds, and facility requirements well beyond what is required by the United States Department of Agriculture.” Through this program, participating scent manufacturer members are committed to using urine from facilities that are taking steps above and beyond those required by the APHIS (Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, an agency of the U.S. Dept. of Agriculture) Herd Certification Program to further reduce the potential of CWD being present in their deer herds.

“Since then, our industry took further steps, investing in science and research that led to a commercially available testing process specifically designed for checking deer urine for CWD, utilizing a widely accepted technology called RT-QuIC,” Burge-

son continued. “It's the same technology being used by several major universities working on cutting-edge CWD research.” Through their participation in the DPP, manufacturers guarantee that cervid urine utilized in their products comes only from facilities that are also participating in the DPP and that strictly comply several safety measures.

In April 2021, the management of the Deer Protection Program (DPP) was transitioned from the ATA to the RHSA, which was formed in December 2020 as a 501(c)6 trade association. RHSA is focused on maintaining and strengthening the DPP to ensure that hunters and wildlife managers have access to urine-based scents that have strong safeguards in place to protect against CWD. RHSA's primary goal is to ensure a healthy future for the scent industry by contributing to a healthy future for wild deer. More information on the organization, a list of its members, and a summary of its efforts can be found at the organization's website.

Obviously, scent manufacturers have a lot at stake here. “We sought out the most recognized and published authorities regarding CWD transmission via urine to get their expertise,” said Phil Robinson, CEO of Tink's. “We are 100 percent confident that our products pose no risk of spreading CWD. The RT-QuIC test is just a confirmation of that fact.”

“We support reasonable science-based approaches to fight CWD and applaud states that have worked with us to create adaptive regulations that allow the use of responsible scent products,” Burgeson said. “We continue to try to work with states that have taken more draconian measures

on urine-based scents that do nothing to stop the spread of CWD. Hunting regulations are always changing and under review, and to that end, hunters should review their state's publications each year for detailed, up-to-date rules and regulations concerning the legalities of urine-based scent products.”

Currently, Arkansas, Connecticut, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Rhode Island, South Carolina, Vermont, and Virginia have various bans on the use of hunting scents. Alabama, Michigan, Mississippi, Montana, Kentucky, and Tennessee have adopted rules or regulations allowing the use of DPP-certified scent products. “Louisiana has adopted regulations that require RT-QuIC testing, and it is hopeful that other states will follow their lead rather than pursuing blanket bans that prohibit traditional hunting methods and would hurt responsible hunting product companies,” Burgeson said.

The bottom line for all of us is clear — CWD is serious business, and as such, stopping its spread needs to be taken seriously. When it comes to urine-based hunting scent products, using only products collected from certified facilities seems to make a lot of sense. These products will clearly display the Deer Protection Program checkmark and RT-QuIC tested logos on the packaging.

Attractant “in estrus” scent products are by far the most widely sold. Are these products an important part of your business? What's your take on the newly-formed DPP and its efforts? Drop me a note at editor@grandviewoutdoors.com and share your thoughts. **HR**

PRO STAFF

Bob Robb has been a full-time outdoor writer since 1978. He's a former staff editor for *Peterson's Hunting magazine*, as well as the former editor of *Western Outdoor News*, *Peterson's Bowhunting*, *Inside Archery*, *Whitetail Journal*, *Predator Xtreme* and *Waterfowl & Retriever* magazines. He's hunted on five continents with both rifles and archery equipment and lived in Alaska for 15 years, where for a time he held an assistant hunting guide's license.



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