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2.5-pound 1-quart reusable GROWLER jar and a 50-pound 5-gallon BUCKitLOAD and they did not disappoint. This year we added an economical 20-pound bag of the popular Apple-Spiced aroma to the line for even more options. They are easy to use: Find your location, Clear a 3-6 foot area, Dump the mineral onto the area, and then watch it work.

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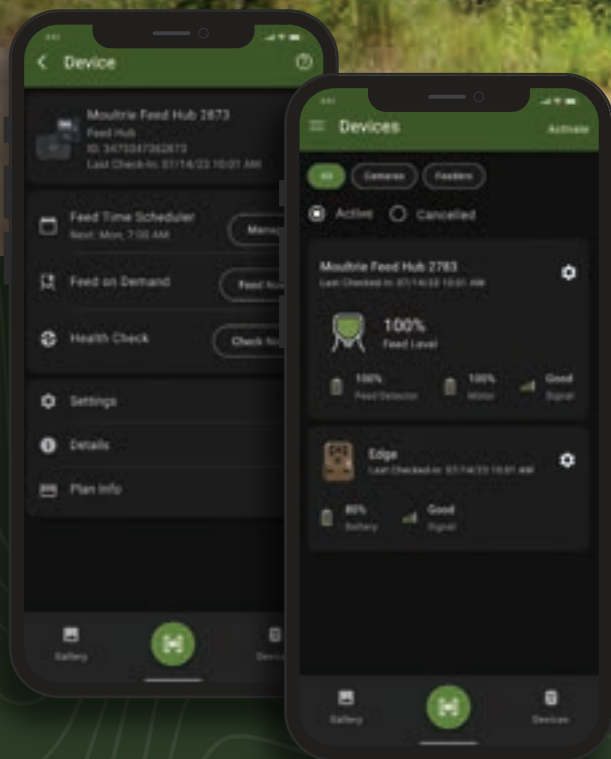
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## Winchester Announces Pet Products Line

Winchester announces the launch of its new pet products lines, the Winchester Signature series and premium brand, King Buck. The pet lines include a wide variety of dog collars, leashes, bowls, vests, training tools and dog beds.

Winchester and The Third Bull & Co. have collaborated to develop products for the millions of pet owners throughout the United States.

“We are extremely excited to offer a very diverse lineup of pet

products that feature the legendary Winchester and King Buck brands,” said Brett Flaughter, President of Winchester Ammunition. “As a brand of more than 150 years, it’s important that our products demonstrate a dedication to value, quality,

and innovation that our customers can rely on.”

To explore the Winchester pet lines, visit [www.worldofwinchester.com](http://www.worldofwinchester.com).

## Jim Easton Passes at 88

James (Jim) Easton passed away at his home in Los Angeles, California, surrounded by family and friends. He was 88 years old.

As a young man in the 1950s, Jim worked in his father’s archery shop by day and studied engineering at UCLA by night. Eventually, after 5 years at Douglas Aircraft, where he worked on the DC8 jetliner, Jim returned to the Easton family business, well known for its ice hockey sticks, baseball bats, and arrow shafts used at the Olympic Games and worldwide.

Jim’s deep involvement in the sport of archery is particularly credited with the sport being designated as a core Olympic Games event today.

Jim had seen the products he developed transform every sport into which he delved. Even after becoming president of the international governing body for archery, and a member of the International Olympic Committee,

his passion for excellence drove him to spend hours per week on his company’s shop floor, improving processes and rubbing elbows daily with his large staff of engineers.

As president of the World Archery Federation for 16 years from 1988 to 2004, Jim Easton innovated new competition formats making archery a television-friendly sport, one of the most-watched during the London 2012 Olympic Games.

Jim’s family-owned archery companies, Easton Technical Products and Hoyt Archery, employ more than 400 workers in Utah and Indiana. He is survived by his wife of 29 years, Phyllis, son Greg, daughter Lynn, and three grandchildren.

## GSM Outdoors Acquires Camillus Cutlery and Cuda Fishing

Camillus Cutlery is one of the oldest knife manufacturers in the industry, and has recently been acquired by GSM Outdoors.

“Camillus is no stranger to innovation, reliability and high-quality manufacturing,” said Zach Henderson, chief sales officer at GSM Outdoors. “This acquisition adds another pillar to our already premier lineup of cutlery brands. We are thrilled to be the stewards of the next chapter in Camillus’ rich history and adding them to the GSM family.”

Cuda, a well-respected company that makes a comprehensive line of fishing tools, is now part of the GSM Outdoors family as well. The company says this acquisition fills a vital need in GSM’s growing fishing portfolio. For inquiries about these two recent acquisitions by GSM Outdoors, contact [marketing@gsmorg.com](mailto:marketing@gsmorg.com).

Leupold Names Lucas Burt as Director of Marketing

Leupold & Stevens recently announced that Lucas Burt has been named the company’s director of

marketing. Burt has been with Leupold since 2017. Since that time, he has served as the company’s brand creative director.

“Lucas has been an important part of our marketing team since he joined the Leupold family,” said Tim Lesser, vice president of product development and marketing for Leupold & Stevens. “His passion and relentless drive benefit the entire team and make him an ideal leader as we continue to grow and evolve our brand marketing efforts.”

Prior to joining Leupold in 2017,

Burt worked as a content director and communications manager at Nike. He now leads Leupold’s consumer and brand marketing team, which develops and executes brand campaigns across multiple platforms, including digital, retail and print.

“Leupold is my home, and I have immense respect for the brand and what it stands for,” Burt said. “I am excited to expand my role within our incredibly talented marketing team as we continue to build upon the brand’s legacy and energy.”

## Melvin Forbes and Family Announce Gunsmithing Scholarship

Melvin Forbes, founder of New Ultralight Arms, and his family have teamed with Montgomery Community College to offer the Melvin Forbes Next Generation Scholarship for gunsmithing students who attend that institution. The first scholarship will be awarded in Fall 2024.

In 2022 Melvin Forbes sold his business to Wilson Combat. Forbes and his family want to help the next generation of gunsmiths reach their full potential, and they feel a scholarship with Montgomery Community College is

the best way to accomplish that goal.

The Melvin Forbes Next Generation Scholarship is completely funded through donations from family, friends, organizations, and manufacturers within the firearms industry. Those interested in contributing can call: (910) 898-9633 or donate online at [www.montgomery.edu/foundation/](http://www.montgomery.edu/foundation/). Make sure to note/indicate the “Melvin Forbes Next Generation Scholarship” with any contribution.





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# How to Pick Great Team Leaders

Determining who exerts influence and commands respect is key to creating great teams.

BY KEN WYSOCKY

**F**ew things will doom a project faster than poor leadership. Without a respected captain at the helm, teams can easily be riven by friction over decision-making authority, assignment of tasks and responsibilities, perceptions of who is or isn't pulling their weight, and who gets credit for success — or blamed for failure.

But picking great team leaders can be a somewhat arbitrary and nebulous process — more art than science. Sure, managers can use metrics like seniority, experience and levels of technical expertise as criteria, but none of those guarantee how effectively people work together as a team.

Worse yet, there's no tried-and-

true litmus test or key personality traits that can help managers predict how people will collaborate and work together.

So how are managers supposed to divine who's a great leader and who's not? New research shows there actually is a key trait managers can home in on — something researchers call status intelligence.

"Status intelligence is the ability to look at social interactions and perceive them accurately," says Gavin Kilduff, an associate professor of management and organizations at New York University's Leonard N. Stern School of Business. He participated in a study led by Siyu Yu, an assistant professor of management

and organizational behavior at the Jones Graduate School of Business at Rice University.

"More specifically, it focuses on the extent to which people can detect status hierarchy in groups — how much influence, esteem and respect each individual on a team commands," he explains.

This includes observing positives, such as which employees team members look to for approval or listen to the most, and negatives, like which employees suggest ideas that are consistently passed over or who constantly interrupt colleagues, Kilduff says.

## MEASURING STATUS

To determine status intelligence,

Kilduff and his colleagues developed a 10-minute test. The first step involved bringing in groups of four people at a time to a lab and directing them to work on a business project. The groups were filmed while they worked and were not told how to act, so their behaviors were natural and organic, replete with interruptions and ego clashes.

At the end of each session, the team members were asked to grade their colleagues on things like how much respect and admiration they garnered from other team members and who exerted the most influence on processes.

Researchers then edited down the 45-minute videos into nine 1- to



**“It’s easy for someone who speaks loudly and with great authority — but really isn’t a good team player — to become a leader.”**

2-minute-long clips and showed them to a new set of workers. They each were asked to rate the meeting participants in the same way the actual participants graded each other, with an eye toward who they thought had the most status and influence, Kilduff says. Researchers then compared the test-takers’ answers to the actual test participants’ answers. Those whose ratings best matched the participants’ ratings probably will work well with others, Kilduff says.

“People who can accurately determine the status hierarchy of those teams are more likely to be good team players,” he explains. “The better they can interpret what’s going on in those groups in terms of status hierarchies, the better they’ll be at working in groups.”

#### **FINDING GREAT TEAM PLAYERS**

The test is not commercially available, but it might be in the future.

“We’d like to help make the workplace function a little more smoothly as a result of our research,” Kilduff says.

But absent such a test, there are still ways for managers to determine



which employees will play well with each other. For example, they could perform a survey to determine which employees are most respected and admired by their co-workers, then distribute that information as a guide for colleagues. This information could even be provided to new employees so they know which co-workers might be the best ones to network or mentor with and ask for advice, Kilduff says.

“If you want to implement an idea, you want to pitch it to the people with enough say and influence to get it done,” Kilduff says.

#### **PROVIDE HIERARCHY CONTEXT**

It also helps to have open and explicit conversations that point out everyone’s relative strengths and areas of expertise, as well as acknowledge that some individuals will exert more

influence over certain decisions than others. This can help teams reduce potential for status conflict because everyone knows where they stand.

“It can be very beneficial to have an open conversation about a task at hand and discuss what each team member brings to the table in terms of task-relevant expertise,” Kilduff says. “This can clarify which employees could be influential in what domains and reduce disagreements about decision-making. If you don’t provide this kind of context, it’s easier for someone who speaks loudly and with great authority — but really isn’t a good team player — to become a leader.”

Kilduff concedes this can be a tough conversation to have with employees. But if it’s handled carefully, with a focus on backgrounds and work experience, it can be successful.

Wouldn’t it just be better and

easier to let status hierarchies emerge organically? Not necessarily, Kilduff says, pointing out that the absence of any knowledge about status just creates more potential for status conflict.

#### **STATUS AWARENESS IS GOOD**

Of course, this approach runs counter to many current workplace dynamics where status is downplayed, if not outright eliminated through elimination of titles, for example. Kilduff points out that this is a recipe for poor team performance because it decreases everyone’s status intelligence.

“If organizations try to ignore status and say it’s bad and that no one should have it, it creates more confusion than good,” he explains, noting that it’s difficult for employees to pretend that an employee with decades of experience is on the same plane as a new employee. **HR**



# Food Plot Seed/Blends

Stock these three options for your customers who are putting in food plots.



BY MARK CHESNUT

I was about to finish disking one of the many 5-acre fields where we plant wheat and clover each year to attract big whitetails when two middle-age men pulled up to bring me some more diesel. As I made the final round and headed back their way, I could tell they were in a deep discussion about something, likely concerning what I was doing.

After a little small talk, they began to put diesel in the old John Deere. “How many fields like this are you planting?” one of them asked. “Ten or 12,” I answered, “same as every year.”

They were still looking at each other quizzically, so finally I asked what it was that was troubling them. Finally, one got up the courage to ask the question they’d both been considering. “You do all this work just to feed deer?”

“No, we do all this work just to kill

deer,” I answered. Later, however, I thought the situation over and realized that the money, time and effort we put into our food plots probably seemed quite absurd to them. Like with most hobbies, where time and money are concerned, deciding how much is too much is an individual thing.

## OF FOOD PLOTS AND DEER HUNTING

Planting food plots is just one of many methods hunters use to attract deer to their hunting property and keep them there for the hunting season. As an added benefit, such plots provide a good, ready food source for not only deer but a variety of other game and nongame animals.

All food plots, however, are not created equal, and there are some things your customers must know before planting season arrives. For one

thing, there are two different main categories of wildlife food plantings—cool season and warm season.

Cool-season forages are planted in the fall or early spring, and some grow throughout the year. They include forage plants like wheat, rye, oats, clovers and brassicas. Deer love brassicas, which are easy to establish, grow quickly and are suited for growing in a wide variety of climates and soil types. Most cool-season forages are perennials, meaning they will come back again the following year after planting, but some are not.

Warm-season plantings are typically planted in spring and grow throughout the summer and into fall. They include forages like soybeans, corn, sorghum, cowpeas and other agricultural type crops. Interestingly, some clovers, though often considered cool-season forages, are very versatile and can be used for either

spring or fall planting. Not only does high-protein clover attract deer, but it also gives them excellent nourishment and even helps bucks grow bigger antlers.

If there’s one piece of advice I could offer those just getting into planting food plots it is to read the information provided by the manufacturer very carefully. It should tell you what region the seed will work best in, when to plant it, what kinds of soils are suitable, how to plant the seed and a number of other critical pieces of information. While tossing aside the directions and blazing away might be the way most of us tend to do things, the manufacturers know more about their product than anyone else, and those who ignore their directions do so at their own peril.

Let’s take a look at three high-quality seed blends for hunters to consider.





### PENNINGTON RACKMASTER DUAL SEASON

Pennington is no newcomer to the seed game, as the company started as a small seed store in Madison, Georgia, nearly eight decades ago. Producer of fine-quality seed for turfgrass and other residential and commercial purposes, the company offers several interesting food plot seed blends that have proven successful for drawing in deer.

Rackmaster Dual Season is an interesting mix of warm season grains and legumes that together make a great spring/summer food plot that will carry over into the fall. According to Pennington, soybeans, iron and clay peas, buckwheat, sorghum and clovers are included in this premium seed mix, which the company says once grown will provide the fuel needed to develop antler mass, body size and milk for developing fawns, along with enhancing overall health of your deer herd.

This seed mix is also ideal for late-summer planting to provide a quickly established, rapidly growing food plot for early-season hunting before the first frost. It does best in areas that receive a minimum of eight hours of full sun each day. Suggested application rate is 10 pounds for one-quarter acre, and liming to a pH of 6.0-6.5 and providing adequate levels of potassium and phosphorus are necessary to ensure a productive food plot.

### EVOLVED HARVEST 5 CARD DRAW

The great thing about seed blends is that they offer many different species of plants, any of which might be preferred by different wildlife at different times of the year. Blends also offer the ability to have one plant at its most palatable age one week, then another just getting prime the next. Evolved Harvest has been delivering high-quality, high-volume food plot seed blends to attract and hold wildlife in an area for years, and 5 Card Draw is a very versatile blend.

5 Card Draw is a five-seed forage variety that works wonders for any planting schedule — spring, summer and even fall. The blend combines the growing power of oats, wheat, white clover, turnip and chicory for a food plot that is as diverse as it is palatable. According to the manufacturer, the forage variety's annual/perennial blend is designed to be eaten, grow back, then be eaten again. With a deer favorite always growing, users will be able to build regular traffic to their plots throughout the season.

Not only will this seed blend attract and hold deer on your customers' hunting property, but the nutritional value of the mix also ensures improved overall health for the entire herd. Available in a 10-pound bag, 5 Card Draw will cover about 11,000 square feet, or one-quarter acre. A 10-pound bag of the blend costs about \$20 — just a few dollars less than the Pennington seed blend discussed previously.



### MOSSY OAK BIOLOGIC HOT SPOT

One of the reasons many hunters give up on the idea of planting food plots to attract and hold deer is the amount of equipment required for clearing and planting, as well as the substantial time required to cultivate and plant the plots. Many companies now have alternatives that are attractive to those without the equipment and time to grow conventional food plots.

One that enjoys good sales throughout the country is Mossy Oak BioLogic Hot Spot. The experts at Mossy Oak know that remote stands often provide the best opportunity for big bucks, but also realize how hard planting plots in those areas can be. Their solution, Hot Spot No Till Food Plot Seed, is a scientifically selected blend of wheat, deer radish, rye and rape that is designed to be fast-germinating and extremely attractive to deer.

According to BioLogic, Hot Spot will germinate anywhere the seed can be raked into the soil, receive at least one-half day of sunlight and get adequate moisture. It is sold in a 5-pound bag that covers about one-quarter acre. Plant BioLogic Hot Spot in late summer or early fall, as it will typically germinate within one week and will remain very palatable for about a month and a half.





## 8 Great Semi-Auto Hunting Rifles to Trigger Increased Sales

Where legal, semi-auto hunting rifles are hot sellers. Try stocking these options to hit a variety of needs and price points.

BY KEVIN REESE

**T**he first rifle my father gave me was a Marlin Model 60 .22-caliber semi-automatic rifle. This rifle was the genesis of my passion for shooting and hunting. In a sense, my passion for firearms was born in the rifle my father gave me. As such, I have always considered semi-automatic rifles to be solid tools for predator control and filling freezers. While it may be a hot button for some, and this feature is not for them, most outdoor enthusiasts consider semi-auto rifles, as I do, to be great options for pursuit of all manner of wildlife.

With my background in the Marine Corps, I also appreciated the fit and form of AR-style modern sporting rifles like the AR-15, AR-10 and LR-308. Countless enthusiasts must agree, considering the AR-15's popularity. More than 20 million are in the hands of law-abiding Americans, many of them hunters. Of course, I still swoon at the sight of more traditionally styled hunting rifles of the rich walnut stock and gloss-blued-barrel variety. As such, with some based on personal hunting and shooting experiences, consider these eight great semi-auto hunting rifles to trigger more sales.





### Browning BAR Mark III

Clear back to my early childhood and earliest firearm memories, the Browning BAR has been a household name — my grandfather owned several Type 1 BARs, as well as a Type 2, all chambered in .30-06. The roots of the semi-automatic BAR, launched in 1967, can easily be traced back to the M1918 light machine gun unveiled toward the end of WWI. Today, the BAR continues to be a top seller for Browning and is quite an heirloom-quality hunting rifle. Of course, while very few changes have been made over the past 55 years, the modern Browning BAR Mark III is a rifle well worth your retail shelf space and more than worthy of space in the gun safes of even the most

discriminating hunters.

Browning's BAR Mark III Rifle boasts a checkered, oil-finished Grade II walnut stock and forend; precision-machined, high-relief engraved alloy receiver with satin-nickel finish; high-polish blued hammer-forged barrel; seven-lug rotating bolt; integral buffering system and an Inflex recoil pad. Browning BAR Mark III rifles are piston-operated, use detachable box magazines, weigh just 7 pounds 2 ounces and come chambered in .243 Win., 7mm-08 Rem., .308 Win., .270 WSM, .270 Win., .30-06 Spfld., 7mm Rem. Mag. and 300 Win. Mag. [www.browning.com](http://www.browning.com)



### Benelli R1

Benelli shotgun performance and reliability is world-renowned; however, the company's semi-automatic centerfire rifles are not nearly as recognized. That said, those same hallmarks of quality craftsmanship, real-world reliability and continuing innovation are well represented in the Benelli R1, and your most demanding hunting customers are sure to agree the rifle is worthy of its branding.

The Benelli R1 is a different breed of semi-automatic rifle, employing the same auto-regulating gas operated (ARGO) system foundational to the Marine Corps' M4 Tactical Shotgun. It's worth saying that if our nation's most elite fighting force can trust

the ARGO system in the world's most extreme environments, hunters can trust it in the woods. The R1 features a rich AA-grade, checkered walnut or black synthetic stock and forend; steel upper receiver; anodized aluminum lower receiver; Crio-treated steel barrel and premium buttpad. Action and barrel finish offerings are matte-black in black-synthetic-stock models and polish/gloss-blued in walnut-stock models. The Benelli R1 is available in .308 Win., 30-06 Sprfld., .300 Win. Mag. and .338 Win. Mag. [www.benelliusa.com](http://www.benelliusa.com)



### Ruger 10/22

Designed by Bill Ruger and Harry Sefried, the Ruger 10/22 Carbine Rifle was introduced in 1964. To date, more than 7 million Ruger 10/22 rifles have been sold, making it one of the most popular rimfire models in firearm history. Through nearly 60 years, plinkers and varmint hunters alike have flocked to Ruger 10/22 rifles because of ease of use, reliability, accuracy, quality construction and price point — the first Ruger 10/22 Carbine model sold for just \$54.50. Even today, Ruger's suggested MSRP on the iconic rifle is just \$389.

Perfect for varmint hunting, the Ruger 10/22 Carbine features Ruger's timeless design; traditionally styled hardwood stock; 18.5-inch hammer-forged, alloy-steel barrel with satin-black finish; gold-bead front sight and adjustable rear sight; and a detachable 10-round rotary magazine. Whether your customers are diehard small-game hunters or introducing the next generation to our hunting heritage, there is no arguing the price point and renowned reputation of the American-made Ruger 10/22 Carbine. [www.ruger.com](http://www.ruger.com)





### Winchester Wildcat .22

Founded in 1866, Winchester grew legs with the Model 1866 "Yellow Boy" Lever-Action Rifle. Just seven years later, Oliver Winchester and company unveiled the Model 1873 Lever Action, often called "the gun that won the West." The rifle's popularity galvanized Winchester and resulted in over 700,000 sold. Today, Winchester is owned by Olin Corporation, with manufacturing licensed to the Herstal Group comprised of FN Herstal and Browning Arms Company. Today, Winchester's production has centered on continuing innovation, reliability and performance. A great example of such focus is found in the Winchester Wildcat .22 Rifle.

Perhaps the most innovative .22-caliber semi-automatic rifle in decades, the Winchester Wildcat launched in 2019. Winchester suggests the Wildcat "purrs like a kitten." I'm not suggesting it does; however, it is incredibly reliable, and it's hard not to get excited about an auto-loading striker-fire .22-caliber rifle that screams dependability and quality at a price point sure to make your customers smile. The Wildcat Sporter boasts a checkered wood stock with satin finish, 18-inch matte-blued steel barrel; 10-round rotary magazine and black composite action and trigger group. The action and trigger group drop out of the receiver in seconds, without tools, for easy cleaning and maintenance. As a further testament to Winchester innovation, the Wildcat is compatible with a variety of other .22LR magazines, including Ruger's 10/22 rotary model. [www.winchesterguns.com](http://www.winchesterguns.com)



### Watchtower Firearms Type 10 .308

I can't possibly think of anybody who understands the importance of high-stakes reliability and performance more than America's most elite special-forces warfighters. Newly founded Watchtower Firearms is led by American heroes who understand those high stakes. Founder and CEO Jason Colosky is a Recon Marine. Watchtower's chief communications officer, Ray "Cash" Care, was a Navy SEAL. Chief Growth Officer Will Kerr was a Recon Marine, team leader and scout sniper. The company is chock-full of military veterans who deeply understand the importance of quality, reliability and

performance, and the proof can be found in the company's Type 10 .308 rifle.

The Watchtower Type 10 Rifle is a direct-impingement AR-platform modern sport-rifle currently available in .308 Win., with plans to expand offerings in 2024. Every rifle is built in Spring, Texas, with exclusively American parts and materials and function-tested to meet performance requirements. The Watchtower Type 10 Rifle boasts 7075-T651 billet aluminum receivers; 15-inch S7M free-floating handguard with M-LOK attachment system; 18-inch, match-grade, .308 Win. barrel with 1:8 rifling and black-nitride finish; 7.62x51mm Durabolt, Tru-Black PVD-finish bolt carrier group; B5 Systems Type 23 pistol grip and Bravo stock; ambidextrous charging handle and selector switch; and Hiperfire EDT2 Heavy Gunner trigger. Retailers can order Type 10 rifles in a black Type III anodized finish as well as three Cerakote colors: Flat Dark Earth, Olive-Drab Green and Wolf Grey. [www.watchtowerfirearms.com](http://www.watchtowerfirearms.com)



### Brenton USA Pursuit Series Scout Fixed Rifle

Brenton USA rose out of frustration during Michigan's 2014 deer hunting season. Founder and owner Bartt Brenton, an engineer with more than 30 years of experience, simply had enough of trying to find a reliable AR-platform rifle chambered in the straight-wall .450 Bushmaster cartridge. In fact, Brenton was frustrated enough that he poured his blood, sweat and tears into designing his own. Brenton USA is the best (and only that I know of) manufacturer of specifically hunting-focused AR rifles. Forget "mil-spec." Brenton USA rifles are "hunt-spec." With his engineering background, lifelong love of the pursuit, and over 200 North American big game kills under his belt, Bartt Brenton and his team of diehard hunters are devoted wholly to produc-

ing the best semi-automatic AR hunting rifle available. Brenton's Pursuit Series Scout Fixed Rifle is not only a great example, but also a model with which I have personal experience.

The Scout Fixed Rifle features 7075-T6 aluminum receivers; 18-inch, 416R stainless-steel, hunter profile barrel with BN protective coating; 8620 bolt carrier and 9310 bolt with NiB coating; Brenton RealFeel G10 PolyCore handguard; Magpul MOE fixed stock; Brenton BT1 adjustable trigger (3.5 to 6.5 pounds) and a Hogue all-weather pistol grip. The Scout is offered in .223 Wylde, 6mm ARC, 6.5 Grendel, 6.8 SPC II, 300 Blackout, 300 HAM'R, 350 Legend and 450 Bushmaster. All rifles include a Brenton USA soft carrying case. [www.brentonusa.com](http://www.brentonusa.com)







### Phoenix Weaponry Emma .300 WSM AR-10/308

A beast of a rifle, the Phoenix Weaponry Emma semi-auto AR-platform rifle is a top-tier system designed by out-of-this-world, rocket-science machinist, Aaron Cayce — yes, out of this world. Cayce's machined components can be found on the International Space Station, the Mars Rover, in deep space and even in human bodies; however, his fabrication passion is rooted in firearms, suppressors and firearm accessories. Honestly, who machines their own gas rings? Aaron Cayce, that's who, and every component of his firearms demonstrate his laser focus on defect-free builds — case in point, the Phoenix Weaponry Emma.

How do I know so much about the Phoenix Weaponry Emma? I own one, and it's the finest AR-platform in my safe. My experience with Emma is in .300 WSM with a Phoenix Weaponry Precision Buttstock. My best results include numerous ¼-MOA groups at 100 yards, the only AR-platform rifle I have achieved sub-MOA grouping with at 1,800 yards, and a South Texas nilgai bull, taken down at 500 yards at 12:30 at night with a single shot using a thermal riflescope and first-focal-plane reticle.

The Phoenix Weaponry Emma boasts matched billet 7075-T7 aluminum upper and lower receivers; integral 20-MOA Picatinny top rail; proprietary ambidextrous charging handle, billet dust cover and selector switch; precision-machined, chrome-moly steel, phosphate coated, match-grade barrel; proprietary barrel nut for enhanced durability and improved handguard mounting; proprietary, tube-shaped, 6061-T6 aluminum, 15-inch handguard; Grade 2 titanium P-APX compensator; PW-designed and -manufactured stainless-steel adjustable gas block; nickel-boron (NiB) bolt carrier group; Magpul MOE grip and an A3 stock with adjustable cheek rest — a Phoenix Weaponry Precision Buttstock also is available for the Emma model. If you've ever heard the term "too much to list," this is it. It's off the charts in quality, performance and reliability and built with your most discriminating hunters and long-range shooters in mind. The Emma is available in .308 Win., 6.5x47 Lapua, .338 Federal, .243 Win., .260 Rem., 7mm-08, .300 WSM and 6.5 CM. Retailers may also order custom finishes. [www.phoenixweaponry.com](http://www.phoenixweaponry.com)



### 51Fifty Apex Series Evolve-15

While 51Fifty Rifles' Evolve-15 was the most innovative semi-auto, direct-impingement modern sporting rifle I ran across at the 2022 SHOT Show and showcases the most innovation I have seen from the AR segment of the industry in years, I became a fan after sending several thousand rounds downrange. Bottom line, the 51Fifty Apex Series Evolve-15 rifle ranks among the most reliable rifles I have tested over several years. One of the most notable, obvious innovations is a jaw-dropper — separating the upper and lower receivers without takedown- or pivot-pins. 51Fifty Rifles founder and owner, Keith Berry, walked me through his patent-pending Rapid Action Cam (R.A.C.) System to break down the rifle, and after a single 30-second lesson, I was an expert. Breaking down the Evolve-15 takes just a few seconds, perfect for clearing, cleaning or maintenance on the fly.

The 51Fifty Evolve-15 is not just machined in America, but all raw materials and components also are sourced from and exclusively produced right here in the good ol'

USA. Originally purposed for more tactical-inspired activities, 51Fifty migrated to the hunting crowd quickly and is becoming quite a reputable producer of multiple-caliber ARs perfectly suited for everything from small game and predators to deer and big boars. Caliber options include .223 Wylde, 6mm ARC, 6.5 Grendel, 6.8 SPC II, .300 Blk, 7.62x39 and, for the straight-wall hunters, 350 Legend. The Evolve-15 features a billet aluminum 7075 receiver set and 6061 handguard; fluted, match-grade barrel options from 16 to 20 inches; Hiperfire PDL GL Trigger set at 2 pounds; full-auto-rated bolt carrier group; adjustable silent-capture buffering system; suppressor-optimized ambidextrous charging handle and adjustable gas block; Luth-AR MBA5 stock; integral ARCA rail, QD sling cups and 45-degree optic mount; and a Dead Air Silencers KeyMo Muzzle Brake. The Evolve-15 is available in eight great color finishes and includes a soft case as well as a bottle of RadcoLube, a premium CLP growing increasingly popular among competitive shooters. [www.51fiftyrifles.com](http://www.51fiftyrifles.com)



# AGM Global Vision

A rising player in the night-hunting optics market, AGM is poised for growth.

BY HR STAFF

**A**GM Global Vision is relatively new to the market, but it's run by industry veterans and is shaking up the night-vision and thermal game. We sat down with Chase Stephens, director of brand development for AGM, to talk about the company and what he sees happening in the industry as a whole.

## Can you talk about the company's history and its place in the industry today?

AGM Global Vision was officially started back in 2019, and it is currently being run by a couple of the original founders, Gary and Mark Tarakanov. They helped co-found multiple companies in the optics space over the course of the last 25 years, the most well-known of which was Armasight. So, although the AGM brand itself is still relatively young, the founders of the company have spent a lot of time and effort over the past couple of years mobilizing a team of very experienced department heads that have more than 40 years of combined industry experience. That experience helped us straighten the learning curve, if you will, because we could avoid a lot of the mistakes and pitfalls that most young companies can only gain through experiencing them first.

I think AGM is currently known within this space for its value and diversity. Many companies in our industry tend to specialize in either thermal imaging or traditional tubed night-vision devices, and AGM is



unique in that it offers products across the entire night-hunting/security product spectrum.

## What sets AGM apart?

I'd say it's probably a combination of our product assortment diversity and commitment to consistent improvement. We're always trying to combine product feedback data from both dealers and end-users, as that typically guides our entire product development process. Every new product or product family we introduce is aimed at improving on previous iterations. It's a pretty simple process for us: do more of what people like and less of what they don't.

## What specific product or model have you seen the most growth in recently?

Well, 'currently' might be a better word than 'recently,' but we're squarely in the middle of our newest, and most anticipated new product introduction of the last couple of years with our Clarion dual-field-of-view thermal riflescopes. We're happy to be the first brand to introduce a dual-field-of-view riflescope equipped with a 384 resolution thermal sensor, as well as the most aggressively priced 640 resolution model. This is the first time we've offered a thermal optic with optical zoom capability, which offers shooters multiple base mag-

nification options, which can then be changed to optimize your field of view depending on your geography/property type.

## What are some features and specs that hunters, specifically, should look for when buying thermal and night-vision?

So, if I had to rank the five most important things most hunters look for in a thermal hunting optic, they'd be something like: image quality/clarity, firmware package, battery life, warranty and compatibility with multiple shooting platforms (AR-style and bolt-action-style).



With night-vision, the market is much more focused on handheld and head-mountable options. Military and law enforcement units use them for increasing their nighttime operational capabilities, while hunters are finding them more and more useful for navigation and hands-free scanning during night-hunting excursions.

**There's a huge price spectrum across thermal and night-vision optics. What accounts for such vast differences in price and quality?**

With thermal, a sizeable portion of the cost differences come from a combination of the resolution of the thermal sensors, the size of the germanium lenses, and the quality of the micro displays. These are highly technical optics with miniature computers on board, so producing those might be difficult in and of itself, but when you are then required to make them durable enough to handle high recoil from a firearm, it gets exponentially harder.

With night-vision, it's typically all about the tube quality and glass optics. High-quality night-vision devices are still used daily by some of the most advanced militaries in the world, so the fact that only the most highly trained units in the most capable militaries are equipped with them kind of signals the difficulty in their production.

**Do you have any predictions on what we can expect out of the shooting industry in general in the next year? The next five years?**

It seems like this type of question gets harder to predict with every passing year. In general, hunting seems to be, quite literally, the oldest traditional,



recreational activity humans engage in. Which means that at its core, it's not a whole lot different to what it was 100 years ago. The hunters and animals haven't changed much. But the equipment has changed, and within the equipment specifically, I think digital optics are just going to get more and more popular.

I think the number of hunters in five years will be pretty similar to what it is today. But the number of digital optics in the shooting industry will probably double within five years. Our youth have grown up with digital devices in their hands, so their familiarity with digital devices will just continue to grow this market, and not just in night-vision. 4K and HD sensors are eliminating a lot of the immediate pixelation that would have limited digital optics 10 years ago. Eventually, the latency will decrease to a point where it's almost unnoticeable, and the customization in reticles, colors, app compatibility,

share-ability, recording, etc. will be enticing to traditional glass hunters.

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

Digital optics in general is where we see the most potential. This includes both thermal and digital day/night optic capabilities. But if the number of shooters/hunters is relatively steady over that same time, then that growth has to be at the expense of something else. My guess is that it will be traditional glass optics. Traditional glass hunting is going to maintain its place as the largest optic category, but the gap will begin to close, year-after-year.

**What can we expect out of AGM in the first half of 2024? What products have you most excited for the future?**

If all goes well, we'll be pretty swamped for the first half of 2024. We just enjoyed the largest SHOT Show in our company history, with multiple long-awaited new product introductions. We introduced the previously discussed Clarion dual-field-of-view scopes, as well as the long-awaited Rattler V2 thermal riflescopes. Our original Rattlers put AGM on the map in the thermal space, but the new housing/sensor/firmware package of Rattler V2 just takes our most popular product family to a new level.

**What sort of product testing do you do?**

So, we do a combination of recoil testing at the factory level, followed by live-fire recoil testing at the range and actual hunting in the field. Before an end-user puts their hands on a new product from AGM, we've typically gone through three or four rounds of changes to housings, molds



or firmware versions before getting it to where we think it's ready for introduction. And the later rounds of development involve working with some of our closest partners and outfitters to help gather real-world feedback that might get missed in an office or on a factory floor.

### How does AGM support its dealers?

In 2023, AGM invested more money on operations, customer support, content creation, product development, advertising and a completely new website than we had in the previous four years combined. We reached a critical mass at one point in late 2022 and early 2023 where all of our internal systems and processes needed to be revamped if we wanted to maintain a high level of customer

**“The better we are at supporting [dealers], the more likely they are to suggest our brand over another.”**

support and satisfaction as we grew at such a rapid pace. And although there were some pain points during the implementation phases, we're now reaping the benefits. This was all done with dealers in mind.

In 2024, we should be doing almost everything faster and more efficiently. We're developing new products at a faster pace, we're shipping at a faster pace, we're offering dealers service and support at a faster pace, and all that should help make our dealers' lives easier. The better we are at supporting them, the more likely they are to suggest our brand over another.



**AGM Rattlers**



**AGM Clarion**

predator-hunting season, then you've most likely got people walking in your store interested in thermal and night-vision. You just might not know it because you haven't carried it before.

### What's your personal favorite AGM product, and why?

A tougher question to answer than you realize! I'm going to have to go with the Clarion 640. Two months ago, I'd have said our Rattler V2 384 with a 35mm lens. But the new Clarion stole the distinction as soon as it hit the market.

### Is there anything you'd like retailers to know about AGM and its products?

We've got something for everyone. We offer the largest assortment in the industry. Whether it's a sub-\$1,000 thermal riflescope with a 256 resolution for a guy wanting to get into the thermal market for the first time, or a high FOM Generation 3+ night-vision goggle with military-grade specifications, we have something for almost anyone that wants to operate at night, for virtually any reason. **HR**

**AGM Rattlers v2**



### Do you have any advice for retailers about selling thermal and night-vision optics and AGM products specifically?

My best advice would probably be, don't be overwhelmed. Thermal and night-vision products are typically sold at much higher price points than traditional daytime optics and accessories. But don't let that scare you. You don't have to take six-figures worth of product to start offering AGM products in your shop. If your shop exists in a state with healthy feral hog populations, or a robust



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# THE ARCHERY BUSINESS PAVILION AT SHOT SHOW IN 2024

THE ARCHERY BUSINESS PAVILION IS A NEW PART OF SHOT SHOW FOCUSED ON OUTDOOR, HUNTING, ARCHERY AND CROSSBOW COMPANIES BROUGHT TOGETHER IN A COMMON SPACE. HERE'S THE LATEST NEWS!

BY ARCHERY BUSINESS STAFF

**B**y now you've likely heard about the new Archery Business Pavilion at SHOT Show. This exciting venture is a collaboration between NSSF and Grand View Outdoors (Archery Business and Bowhunting World magazines are part of the Grand View Outdoors family of brands.)

Since the announcement in February 2023, many companies that have never attended SHOT have booked their space. Check out the numerous brand logos on the following two pages to see who will showcase products in the Archery Business Pavilion. It's an impressive list. From FeraDyne Outdoors to The Pure Archery Group, representatives will be on hand to answer questions about bows, arrows, sights, rests, releases, broadheads, strings and much more.

The SHOT Show covers more than 816,000 net square feet of exhibit space, featuring over 2,500 companies showcasing the latest in firearms, ammo, hunting and shooting accessories, outdoor apparel and now — archery gear! It attracts buyers, media and other industry professionals from around the world.

Held annually in Las Vegas, Nevada, the SHOT Show is the largest and most comprehensive trade show for professionals involved with the shooting sports and hunting industries.

## SHOWCASING ARCHERY AND OUTDOOR GEAR

"More than 4,000 retail buyers that attended SHOT Show the last 2 years have expressed interest in archery and bow hunting products," said Chris Dolnack, NSSF Senior Vice President and Chief Customer Officer. "The new Archery Business Pavilion provides these buyers with an opportunity to source archery, as well as firearms, ammunition, and accessories, all under one roof.

"Listening to our customers is a key part of the sustained growth and success of the SHOT Show. We look forward to receiving exhibitor and buyer feedback so that we can make the Archery Business Pavilion customer experience even better for the 2025 show.

"Grand View Outdoors publishes *SHOT Business* for NSSF and *Shooting Sports Retailer*, so partnering with Grand View Outdoors and *Archery Business* magazine made perfect sense. Grand View Outdoors brings a unique perspective with their longtime involvement with the archery industry and understanding of the firearm industry.

"We included archery lanes within the Pavilion so that buyers can experience the product performance firsthand. And we added an archery component to Industry Day at the Range as well to provide both buyers and media with a hands-on opportunity to test new products and learn about the features and benefits."



# archery

BUSINESS



Grand View Outdoors President Derrick Nawrocki added, "This partnership with NSSF represents a significant opportunity for the archery industry to come together and demonstrate the innovation, technology and creativity that defines archery with the SHOT Show.

"The *Archery Business* team is very committed to promoting the Pavilion along with the growing list of innovative exhibitors, friends and partners who are joining us at the SHOT Show this year and in future years to come.

"Our *Archery Business* brand has been a rock-solid guide for archery manufacturers and dealers for nearly 50 years. Many consider *Archery Business* to be the 'Voice of the Archery Industry,' providing retailers with cutting-edge gear reviews, exclusive looks at top brands, and constantly provides key intel to help drive more business in their shops."

### ARCHERY BUSINESS PAVILION SPECIFICS

- ▶ The new Archery Business Pavilion will be located within the upcoming annual SHOT Show in Las Vegas, Nevada, from Jan. 23 through Jan. 26, 2024.
- ▶ Any manufacturer of outdoor, hunting, archery and crossbow related products can exhibit in the new Archery Business Pavilion.
- ▶ You'll find the Archery Business Pavilion in Caesars Forum in the Academy Ballroom.
- ▶ Exhibit space is limited, and it's first come, first served.
- ▶ In future years, those who exhibited in 2024 will have first choice for space.
- ▶ The *Archery Business* team, including editors and key staff, will be in the ballroom working on best ways to cover and promote companies that exhibit.
- ▶ Additional coverage about the Archery Business Pavilion will appear in *SHOT Daily* during the show and within the pages of other B2B brands such as *Archery Business*, *Hunting Retailer* and *Shooting Sports Retailer* as we get closer to SHOT Show.

### BOOKING YOUR SPACE IN FUTURE YEARS

Visit [www.SHOTShow.org/archeryfloorplan](http://www.SHOTShow.org/archeryfloorplan) to see the Archery Business Pavilion floor plan for 2024. If you're looking at a map of the entire SHOT Show space, the Archery Business Pavilion is located in the Caesars Forum area showing SHOT Show University and meeting rooms.

It's likely that by the time you read this article, it will be too late in the game for you to make the decision to join other companies in the Pavilion during SHOT Show 2024. That said, it's never too early to begin thinking about the future, and specifically SHOT Show 2025. Be sure to look for future content in this magazine about the Archery Business Pavilion, including feedback from those companies that attended in 2024. For more information on the Pavilion and SHOT Show, visit [www.SHOTShow.org/archeryexhibit](http://www.SHOTShow.org/archeryexhibit).

## BARNETT SHOWCASING NEW DEMUN CROSSBOW AT SHOT SHOW

Barnett Crossbows recently announced that they will attend SHOT Show 2024 and have an additional booth in the Archery Business Pavilion. Barnett will showcase its newest and most cutting-edge arrival, the break-action Demun Handheld Crossbows Series.



Barnett is the original pioneer of break-action crossbows. This new series includes the Demun Tri Strike, Demun Accu Strike and Demun Accu Strike PRO. The Demun collection is an excellent beginner crossbow for target practice and hunting smaller animals.

The Demun Tri Strike and Demun Accu Strike feature single-stage break-action cocking, an adjustable fiber-optic sight, and a folding foregrip. The Demun Tri Strike has a patented three-feed chamber for quicker reloading and firing. The Demun Accu Strike features a diamond-knurl soft grip for outstanding control and feel.

The Demun Accu Strike PRO features a patented two-stage break-action cocking, which reduces the draw weight by approximately 50%, a diamond-knurl soft grip, and an adjustable reflex sight. With a draw weight of 100 pounds, the Demun Accu Strike PRO sets itself apart from the other handheld crossbows in the series.

Those attending SHOT Show 2024 are encouraged to visit the Barnett booth in the Archery Business Pavilion — #84265 — for a firsthand look at Demun Handheld Crossbows and other great products from Barnett. The company will have another booth — #13273 — in the Venetian Expo Level 2.



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# THE ARCHERY BUSINESS PAVILION AT SHOT SHOW IN 2024

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# ARCHERY BUSINESS PAVILION

NOW IS THE TIME TO START PLANNING FOR YOUR 2025 BOOTH IN THE ARCHERY BUSINESS PAVILION

FOR INFORMATION ON EXHIBITING IN THE ARCHERY BUSINESS PAVILION, CONTACT:

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NEW EXHIBITOR APPLICATIONS WILL BE ACCEPTED AS OF JANUARY 23, 2024.  
SPACE SELECTION WILL BE HELD LATE SPRING/EARLY SUMMER







# Selling Used Gear

Taking in quality gear on trade can bring new customers and more sales.

BY ACE LUCIANO

I'm sure you've seen the situation before.

A customer comes in, really wants something in your store, but doesn't quite have the money to afford it. They leave dejected, scouring the internet on their phone for a better price, and you miss out on a sale.

Photos: iStock Photo/Jump photography



The digital age has brought us many new and useful sales tools since the early 2000s. First there was Craigslist, which demolished the newspaper revenue model by taking away one of their top sources of revenue — the classified ads. Over a decade later, we now have many options online to buy and sell. Offer Up. Facebook Marketplace. Specialty sites like Auto Trader and Gun Broker ... literally hundreds of places for people to sell their used items.

It's obvious that there's a huge market for used gear, and you should be taking advantage of it.

**SELLING USED**

It wasn't too long ago that the average price for a full outfit of hunting apparel was under \$100 for most applications. Today, it's not uncommon for that number to exceed \$1,000 and, even more often these days, as

on their item of value, which the pawnbroker holds as collateral. Often, the person who brought the item in cannot afford to pay off the loan on the item, so the pawn broker sells it. There are numerous regulations in the pawnbroker business, and I am not suggesting you become a pawn shop, but it's rather easy for you to become a dealer in lightly used items.

Here are some of the top items to consider dedicating a portion of the space in your retail store to.

**FIREARMS**

This one is a no-brainer. If you have a gun store, you are likely doing this already. Guns are rather easy to value, sell well and you are likely familiar with all of the processes involved in both looking up values and selling and transferring them to a new owner. If you don't already take trades on firearms, I highly encourage you to

**"I'm not suggesting you become a pawn shop, but it's rather easy for you to become a dealer in lightly used items."**

high as \$1,500 to \$2,000. The same is true with firearms and optics. \$200 used to get you a pretty nice rifle scope. Today, that number is likely over \$400. Firearms are another entity entirely. It is rare for a gun to lose value. Thinking of every firearm I have ever owned, I have never lost money and, numerous times, have made a significant amount of money on firearms that I have sold or traded.

The entire concept of the pawn shop business (or at least half of it) is based on this premise. People come in and take out a high-interest "loan"

do so. You are leaving money on the table from a large percent of existing and potential customers if you don't.

**OPTICS**

There used to only be a handful of manufacturers of quality optics in the hunting and outdoors world. Names like Zeiss, Swarovski, Leupold, Weaver, Nikon, and Bushnell come readily to mind. Today, there are well over 100 different brands of rifle scopes, binoculars and spotting scopes. The market has also expanded into additional optics like thermal



imaging and red-dot sights, as well as night-vision scopes and binocular/monoculars.

A huge advantage to the marketplace and you is that, thanks to a few innovative manufacturers, almost all optics products today come with a lifetime, transferable warranty. That means that your used scope is covered under the same warranty as a new scope. This gives the consumer a huge incentive to buy.

Ponder this situation: A customer walks into your store and decides they want to buy a hunting rifle. They pick out a nice bolt action in a typical hunting caliber and you or your employee instinctively bring up optics: "Now that you have this nice rifle, let's help you pick out a quality

↑ Many optics today come with a lifetime, transferable warranty, which makes quality used optics much more appealing to customers.



scope to put on it.” The customer, when asked about their budget, says, “I’m probably looking for something in the \$100-\$150 range.”

That’s a very limiting amount of money. While there are some quality optics at those levels, you certainly can get a much higher-quality optic by adding \$100 or \$200 to that line. But because you have added a new policy in your store and will take trades on high-quality optics, you have a very nice 2-10x40 scope that’s in excellent condition and comes with a transferable warranty. It re-tailed for over \$400 new but you can sell it to him with the rifle for \$200.

The customer wins two ways. They now have a high-quality optic to put on their new hunting rifle, and they have saved a great deal of money while doing so. You win, of course, because you likely made money both on the trade-in and when you sell it to the new owner. Imagine the options you will have once your lines expand to things like high-end binoculars and spotting scopes.

### RELOADING EQUIPMENT

The option here can be two-fold. First, if you don’t sell reloading supplies, used equipment gives potential customers a reason to visit your store when they otherwise may not. Second, the price of ammunition continues to increase dramatically and doesn’t look to be coming down any time soon, causing many to explore loading their own. They’re going to buy from someone, and now you have the chance to expand your lines without a large inventory order.

Second, if you do sell reloading supplies, this can give you a chance to sell numerous accessories and supplies to someone after they buy.

Some suggestions to start with:

Single-stage presses tend to be rather simple products that last a



↑ Good treestands can last a long time, and there’s a market for used options if you’re confident they are still in good, safe condition.

long time. Look to make sure that all parts are included and functioning.

Shotshell reloaders from high-quality brands like MEC, Hornady and Lyman are long-lasting and have numerous accessories available for up-sells.

Reloading dies also make sense, but make sure you look through them with a flashlight to ensure they are clean and rust-free. Check the threads for damage, and make sure that the die can be broken down into its various components for both cleaning and replacement.

### APPAREL

There was a time when you could buy an entire hunting outfit for around \$100-\$150, but today it’s not uncommon to spend that on a high-tech shirt or pair of pants.



↓ Hunting apparel has gotten considerably more technical — and expensive. If you’re careful and take in the right items, they’ll quickly move back out the door.



Technical outerwear with Gore-Tex membranes starts at several hundred dollars and goes up from there. As we all know, every year new products are brought to the marketplace. There are new waterproof technologies, new camouflage patterns, new features on products, new methods of scent suppression and even clothing that masks the human electromagnetic field.

These types of items will likely never see the shelves of a thrift store, and there are literally thousands of them posted on websites like Offer Up and Facebook Marketplace. One of the large challenges to people who buy on these sites are they often do not have the ability to thoroughly handle or view the item before they purchase unless the seller is rather close by. Another is that if there is some sort of unseen issue with the product, they are going to be stuck with it and have no recourse. That gives you an opportunity.

If you are going to sell lightly used apparel, there are several things you should focus on. The first are high-end clothing lines, like Sitka, KUIU and others. While Sitka can be found in retail stores, KUIU is an online-only brand. By gaining an assortment of gear with this and other online-only brand names, you are taking away some of the advantage those manufacturers have by selling their product direct. You also give yourself a great opportunity for someone to buy more from you. Perhaps they need a new firearm, but have extra gear that they don't use anymore. With the ever-increasing price of ammunition, there are numerous calibers that now retail close to and even over \$100 per box. Low- and mid-priced apparel is also an opportunity. While you will not make the same margin on these items due to their initial lower sales price,



it is an opportunity to gain a new customer by bringing them into your store when they otherwise might not visit. The opportunity for up-sells, memberships to a “buyers club” and the potential additional sales to that customer is worth the effort.

When looking at used apparel, there are some important things to be aware of. Check all seems to look for rips or unraveling threads. Look for stains on the item that likely are permanent if they are still there. If it is a waterproof item and you can see the taped seams inside, check all of them for good adhesion and a lack of bubbles, which can signify a shorter lifespan. Check the item against a new item to see if there is a degree of fading to it. Finally, check all zippers, buttons, pockets, etc. for hidden issues that might not be initially obvious.

### BOOTS

Boots are another product that have rapidly climbed up to the plane of premium pricing. While a good pair

of boots that will last many years used to cost under \$100, that now tends to be a starting point for the lowest-end products. Brands like Crispi, Kenetrek, Zamberlan and others often top the \$500 mark, with some going much, much higher.

If you are going to take trades on boots, you should make sure that they are in lightly used condition. Some important things to look for are obvious repairs, scuffs, scratches and seam damage. Check the soles of the boot for uneven or excessive tread wear. If there is a lining, feel around inside for any noticeable, bumps, tears or unusual wear.

Finally, make sure all apparel and boots that you put out in your establishment are clean. You can wash them ahead of time, but it's much easier to only take trades of clean gear.

Selling used items may require a slight paradigm shift on your part, but it can be a clear advantage for you and your customers. **HR**

↑ Boots make up another category that has moved into premium pricing, but lightly used high-end boots can be a bargain for customers.



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# 12 Tasks That Will Make Your Business Better

Keep your management hand on the throttle in 2024 with these month-by-month small-business improvement tips.

BY JIM KNEISZEL

**Y**ou've celebrated the holidays and your New Year's Eve celebration is but a foggy memory. Now it's time to plan for taking care of your business in 2024.

Perhaps in recent years you've just let the business happen. You've been content to take any new customers who've come along, and tried your darndest to continue giving good service to your regular clientele. Your crew seems happy to roll along with the status quo, so you haven't instituted any new benefits programs or reviewed their wages.

Everybody seems happy. Don't rock the boat. Has that been your mission statement lately? In an effort to reset your expectations for 2024, I present a month-by-month business refresher that will hopefully lead to more revenue, lower expenses and even happier employees. Follow these tips and let me know how you fared at the end of the year:

## **JANUARY – ADDRESS TRAINING AND CONTINUING EDUCATION**

Training opportunities abound, especially this month if you are sending employees to the SHOT Show. There, the NSSF puts on a variety of seminars that can help you improve your business. Plus, It's wise to knock out training required by your state or local permitting agency during the slower winter.



## **FEBRUARY – PLAN FOR LABOR NEEDS**

Look back at the past few years. Have associates been working longer hours, causing burnout and raising overtime expenses? Adding to their workload can stretch your workforce to the extreme. Maybe you expect enough business this year to add another gunsmith or sales associate, or put someone on the cash register or social media work full time. Remember, adding employees doesn't only impact you on the expense side. You should raise significant revenue with each new worker you put online.

## **MARCH – ORDER SUPPLIES**

Organize the warehouse space and take inventory of consumable items like paper products and cleaning supplies. Give every piece of machinery in the gunsmith's shop a good once-over and see what needs upgraded or repaired. Talk to your vendors about expected product availability, shipment delays and any specials for bulk purchases. Anticipate your needs based on last year's usage and forecast your demand for 2024. Explore whether you can enter into agreements for bulk purchases with your friendly competitors.

## **APRIL – MAKE SURE YOUR TECHNOLOGY IS WORKING**

Check your accounting, routing or other computer software programs for updates. Clean up the customer database, adding and deleting contacts as needed. Assess your company smartphones and tablets for continued viability. If they are more than a few years old, consider replacement to speed up your workflow. Processor speeds and operating systems evolve rapidly in these hand-held devices, and older units can leave you standing awkwardly on the floor with a customer. It might not always feel

Photos: istock





like it, but you're money ahead keeping technology equipment refreshed and ready to go.

#### **MAY – PLAN COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT**

In the days of social media, reputation building is a big deal. If your growth strategy doesn't include donating your time and expertise in some way to civic service, it's time to start thinking of ways you can pitch in. Call local festival organizers and see if there is a sponsorship opportunity. Choose a cause near and dear to your heart and partner with that charity on a project. It could be anything. Do your part for the community and then don't be afraid to tell the world about it through your Facebook page or company website.

#### **JUNE – PERFORM SPOT CHECKS**

You trust your associates, sure. But don't take for granted that they're providing the best service possible every day. Shadow each crew member one day this month. You can choose whether or not to tell them in advance about the spot checks. Watch how they follow safety procedures. Make sure they leave a work site as clean as they found it. After the spot checks, sit down for a constructive meeting and share what you learned. Work hard to make it a positive experience — your people might not be thrilled with the idea, but it's a win-win if customer service protocol is validated or improved in the process.

#### **JULY – REVIEW EQUIPMENT MAINTENANCE**

Equipment breakdowns are costly. Patches and Band-Aid solutions to keep gear and equipment running can present a looming safety hazard or a major inconvenience. Inspect your store's departments on a stag-



gered schedule, planning to look at the entire place over the course of a month. Address any issues you find immediately.

#### **AUGUST – REVIEW MARKETING PLANS**

How about sending out a mailer to your customers to remind them about a sale or new stock? You could offer an August special for \$10 off a full gun cleaning or service to keep the shop busy ahead of hunting season. This is also a good time to look back at early-season spikes in business and figure out how to better use advertising dollars, your website and social media marketing to even things out a little.

#### **SEPTEMBER – TRIM BUSINESS EXPENSES**

You've been focused on building revenue, but take a step back this month and try cutting business expenses. Look at how much you paid for supplies and ask vendors if there are ways to cut those costs.

Review various insurance policies, from auto to business to health. Are those policies still the best value and compatible with your current needs? Compare your building rent or mortgage interest rate to see if there are ways to economize. Remember that spending efficiency — just like adding a few new customers — raises the bottom line.

#### **OCTOBER – CELEBRATE SUCCESSES WITH YOUR TEAM**

Your crew has busted their butts for your business. Now it's time to show them you appreciate the effort. There are many ways to send a clear message that you value employees, from serving them burgers off the grill in the parking lot to giving everyone a paid day off when business starts to slow down. Actions are important, but you also need to tell them how they've helped support your business.

#### **NOVEMBER – REVIEW THE EMPLOYEE BENEFITS PACKAGE**

You showed employees you care in

October; now look at initiatives that will keep employees on your team for the long haul. Review the benefits package for your employees and compare it to what similar companies in your area are offering. Your local Chamber of Commerce can probably help you make the comparison. Do you offer paid vacations, flex scheduling, a retirement account or health and life insurance to your workers? If not, what steps could you take to add those benefits? Remember that employee retention is a huge issue, both because quality workers are as valuable as gold and finding new ones is expensive and time-consuming.

#### **DECEMBER – GIVE THANKS**

Express gratitude to your customers for their loyalty, to your family for their patience, and to your community for providing a great place to live and work. The message can go out in many ways, from a holiday postcard to customers, to an ad in the local paper to give a shout-out to your neighbors. **HR**





# What Women Want

You can increase sales by focusing on women and the big picture.

BY LAURIE LEE DOVEY

**Y**ou are probably already aware that women make up the largest growth segment in hunting and firearm sales. They are also the major influencers on our children and the next generation of outdoorsmen and women. Why, then, is it so difficult for women to find hunting apparel in retail shops that fits their shapes and needs? The answer appears simple. Women are still such a small segment of the population that catering to them may seem counterintuitive.





Consider, however, that 20% of firearms hunters in 2022 were women, according to the National Sporting Goods Association. And look at the associated numbers of female participation in partner activities (see sidebar). The numbers soar.

So, stocking a lineup of women's apparel could increase your apparel sales exponentially and bring in a whole new customer segment that also buys guns, ammo and accessories for themselves and their families.

Sounds simple, right? Not so fast. The world of women's hunting apparel has evolved, but many women are still wearing men's clothing. Why?

They say they:

- Look for women's clothing in local shops, but can't find choices
- Realize many women's lines are nothing more than relabeled or slightly reworked men's designs
- Discover offerings for gals don't have the technical and performance features found in men's lines
- Find racks stocked with sizes that don't fit

Don't despair. These four challenges give you a starting point for identifying what women want: Apparel that's made for their bodies and offers the features available in men's styles.

"When you offer solutions, the challenges also set up your blueprint for success," admits Wendy Gavinski, who launched DSG Outerwear (DSG), a female-focused outdoor apparel company, in 2010.

DSG stands for Doing Something Great, and that's exactly what Gavinski has done. Her company is thriving and offers women who enjoy a wide variety of outdoor sports, including hunting, access to products that enhance comfort, enjoyment and in-the-field success.

"Set yourself up for success by incorporating these simple solutions to



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better serve women, bring them and their families into your shop, build a new customer base, and contribute toward the Big Picture," Gavinski adds.

**1. Make your shop the home to sportswomen in your area.** This requires more than just stocking an apparel line. Find ways to connect with women and their families. Develop a marketing plan to reach women.

Most importantly, be cognizant of what Gavinski calls the Big Picture, which is understanding the power women hold financially, within the

### Women by the Numbers (National Sporting Goods Association)

**HUNTING WITH FIREARMS**

2022 - 2.8 million females, 14.1 million males = 20%

**HUNTING WITH BOW AND ARROW**

2022 - 1.4 million females, 5.0 million males = 28%

**TARGET SHOOTING - AIRGUN**

2022 - 1.3 million females, 3.9 million males = 33%

**TARGET SHOOTING - LIVE AMMUNITION**

2022 - 5.1 million females, 13.3 million males = 38%

**PAINTBALL GAMES**

2022 - 1.3 million females, 3.4 million males = 38%

**ARCHERY (TARGET)**

2022 - 1.9 million females, 3.6 million males = 52%



## Reach Out to Women's Organizations

**BECOMING AN OUTDOORS WOMAN (BOW):** Thirty-eight states and six Canadian provinces offer Becoming an Outdoors-Woman (BOW) workshops. Each year, tens of thousands of women step outside to learn new outdoor skills in a safe, supportive environment.

**BABES WITH BULLETS:** From its Diamond Camps to firearms instruction nationwide, led by women ranked nationally or internationally in sanctioned competition, all instructional events are women-centric. Instructors and key individuals within the program are also available for events beyond those held by the group.

**WOMEN IN THE OUTDOORS:** Women who seek outdoor adventures or more quality time with family and friends find that connection through hundreds of Women in the Outdoors events hosted by NWTf chapters around the United States.

family, as overseers of most family activities, and over the growth and future of the hunting industry.

Connect with a few local or regional influencers to help you promote, educate and pull women into the shop. Engage a great lady hunting guide, a formidable turkey caller, a few up-and-coming shooters/hunters, the coach of the local girls' shooting team, or a fitness guru who also hunts to join you, help tell your story, and introduce products to gals.

Hold ladies' events to draw women into the shop to see your offerings. There are so many options: a hunting apparel fashion show; a sip-and-try (beverages/apparel) evening where gals can enjoy some camaraderie and touch, try on, and learn about apparel offerings; a family night at the shop to get the whole gang in for some fun; and/or partner with organizations already reaching women and holding events, such as Becoming an Outdoors Woman, the National Wild Turkey Federation's Women in the Outdoors program, or Babes With Bullets, which offers exciting and fun firearms instruction for gals.



↑ DSG's clothing comes in a huge range of sizes — something that fills a tremendous hole in the women's gear market.

When your shop is the only diamond in the pile of coal, women will be drawn to you.

**2. Select products made for women specifically.** The National Center of Health Statistics of the Centers for Disease Control reports the measured average height, weight, and waist circumference for adults aged 20 and over. The average woman is 63.5 inches tall, weighs 170.8 pounds, and has a waist circumference of 38.7 inches.



While men's torsos will tend to be largely straight from top to bottom, women will have narrower waistlines compared to the rest of their torsos, wider hips, and bustlines. How can they possibly wear the same clothing? Manufacturers who simply take their men's lines and size them down are majorly missing the mark by ignoring the (rather obvious) differences in proportion between body types.

**3. Consider manufacturers who focus on features and technology.** These pieces are often more expensive than basic pieces, but the women we talked to want technology in their apparel.

This isn't to say you can't offer more economical choices, as some women prefer to start buying less expensive gear and move up the

↑ Wendy Gavinski launched DSG in 2010. She reminds retailers that women often control household spending and oversee the bulk of their families' activities.

technology ladder over time.

**4. Pay attention to the 36–24–36 inches designation,** which frequently has been given as the hourglass proportions for women since at least the 1960s, and touted as an ideal. The key is the hourglass, not the size. Most American women don't come close to fitting this model, which is approximately a size 4-6.

Sixty-eight percent of U.S. women are a size 14 or larger. The average American woman is now a size 16. Perhaps that average falls to a size 12 to 14 among more active women,



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Sixty-eight percent of U.S. women are a size 14 or larger. The average American woman is now a size 16. Perhaps that average falls to a size 12 to 14 among more active women,



but the point is, tiny sizes are not the bulk of the market. Those extra small, small, and even medium sizes can end up hanging on racks. DSG offers sizes from XXS to 5XL, so fitting the larger segment is easy.

In addition, Gavinski suggests retailers work with suppliers with complete lines of women's apparel and accessories, which simplifies the purchasing process, allows staff to fully learn the selling points across the line, and offers women all the apparel items they're looking for from base layers to outerwear, hats and gloves.

"It's also important to find apparel companies that offer retailers support," Gavinski says. "We want to be a partner to our retailers. We know the space can feel difficult to navigate, so we look for ways to ensure retailer success. That's why DSG offers a starter package for shops that provides a full lineup of products and most importantly, a retail display, for a modest investment of \$4,000.

"I can't overstate the importance

of displays when selling to women," Gavinski adds. "Marketing to women goes far beyond simply stocking products. We can't continue to treat them as invisible. When a gal walks into a shop, if she can't immediately visualize products focused on her, she's most likely out of there quickly.

"Focused displays help you show the products in a way that allows women to immediately identify you as female-friendly and -focused. Further, women can easily find the products because they're not simply scattered among the men's apparel. I can't over-emphasize the importance of this one, simple step by retailers."

Beyond providing the display, DSG also offers a no-minimum order policy, in-store signage, product training, drop-shipping of special orders to the customer or shop, access to DSG's influencer partners who can come to your shop to make a presentation or introduce the products at a ladies event, apparel for female shop employees to help women visual-



### STATISTICS ON THE PURCHASING POWER OF WOMEN

From *Girlpowermarketing.com*

#### WOMEN AND GLOBAL SPENDING

Women control over \$31.8 trillion in worldwide spending. (Source, *Catalyst.org/research/buying power*, 2020)

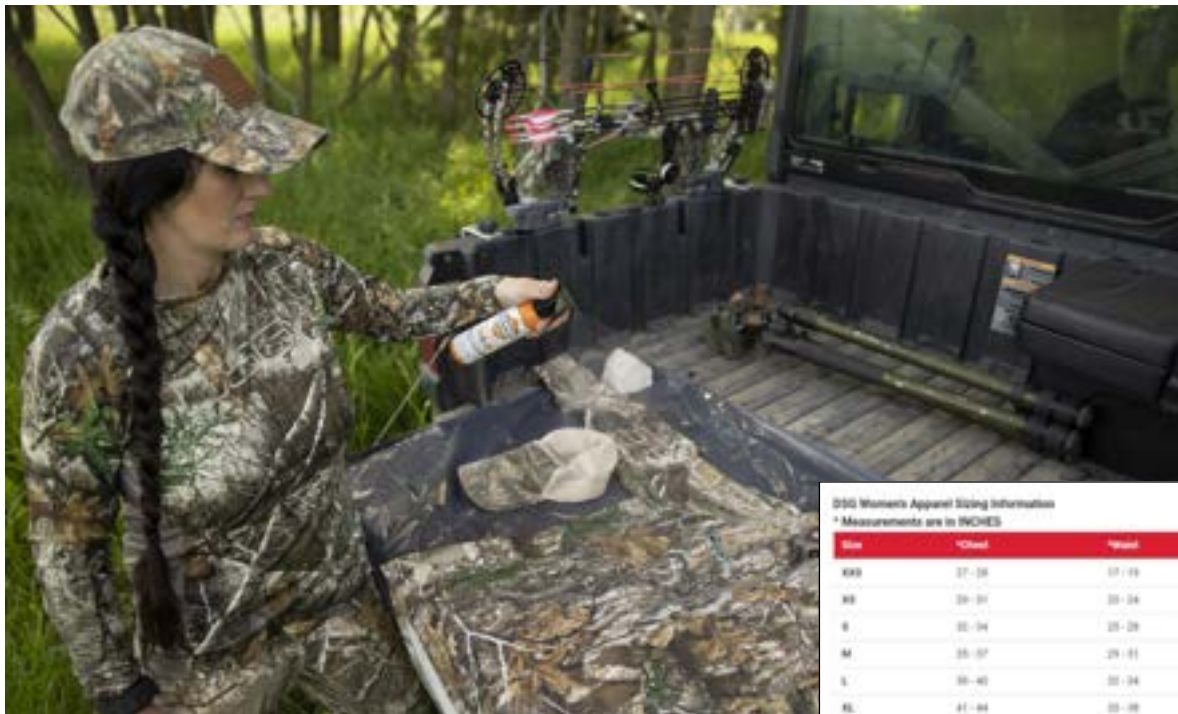
#### WOMEN AND U.S. SPENDING

- Women make up more than half of the U.S. population, and control or influence 85% of consumer spending (Source, Forbes 2019)
- The purchasing power of women in the U.S. ranges from \$5 trillion to \$15 trillion annually. (Source: Nielsen Consumer, 2013)
- Women control more than 60% of all personal wealth in the U.S. (Source: Federal Reserve, MassMutual Financial Group, BusinessWeek, Gallup)
- Women purchase over 50% of traditional male products, including automobiles, home improvement products, and consumer electronics. (Source: Andrea Learned, "Don't Think Pink")
- Approximately 40% of U.S. working women now out-earn their husbands. (Source: U.S Bureau of Labor Statistics)



← DSG's line includes several different camo patterns and gear specific to the different seasons and uses women are looking for.





ize your offerings, help with ladies events, and more.

Whether you're deciding to implement a women's apparel section or updating current selections, Gavinski and the women we spoke to outlined what women look for when buying hunting clothes. All said, "Details matter."

**Technical Advancements:** Although technology often means higher prices, avid hunters are looking for performance that supports success in the field. Look for lines that give gals the biggest bang for their buck, whether top-end selections or those of modest price.

**Fit:** Fit isn't just size; it's the features incorporated that work for a woman's body. Here are a few details to look for when selecting women's apparel:

- Shorter shoulder-to-waist length and a tapered waist or even torso area in tops (shirts, jackets, vests)
- Gusseted underarms and pleated back yokes that provide more arm and shoulder mobility
- Darted chest to accommodate bustlines

- Extended shirttails that stay tucked into pants
- Smaller waist sizes with a wider fit through the hips
- Belt loops
- Heavy-duty, two-way zippers, which provide enhanced mobility and comfort
- Adjustable waist, wrist and leg tabs, Velcro, or snaps, which allow for a personalized fit.

**Comfort:** All hunters are looking for comfort in apparel, and fit is the initial key. However, fabrics are another comfort element that should be considered. Include layering choices from wicking to outerwear.

**Weather Protection:** Match your local weather patterns and offer items that suit your environment. In Oregon, offer great raingear. In South Carolina, consider the heat and stock wicking fabrics. Don't ignore layering options when stocking products.

In cold conditions, warmth and moisture management are critical to comfort. A wicking base layer to pull moisture away from the body is the foundation. Next up is warmth from insulation in a mid-layer product.

DSG Women's Apparel Sizing Information  
\*Measurements are in INCHES

Size	Chest	Waist	Hips	Length
XXX	37-38	27-28	38-39	38
XX	35-36	25-26	36-37	36.75
X	33-34	23-24	34-35	35.5
M	31-32	21-22	32-33	34.25
S	29-30	19-20	30-31	33
XS	27-28	17-18	28-29	31.75
2XS	25-26	15-16	26-27	30.5
3XS	23-24	13-14	24-25	29.25
4XS	21-22	11-12	22-23	28
5XS	19-20	9-10	20-21	26.75

Fleece, down, or synthetic down materials trap warm air close to the body, creating a barrier against the cold. Protection against wind and rain, and overall breathability, come from the outer layer. Breathable materials like Gore-Tex are great choices, as they keep moisture out while allowing perspiration to escape.

Conversely, staying cool and dry in warm climates is important. Wicking fabrics are crucial to wicking moisture away from the skin to keep hunters cool. Synthetic materials are often preferred for warm-weather hunts because they dry quickly. Also, consider long-sleeved shirts and pants that protect against insects and sun exposure.

**Cargo Pockets:** Is there a hunter on Earth who has enough pocket storage? Well, women need to carry gear, too. Simple little slit pockets don't cut it. Like men, many women are opting for more tactical-type apparel specifically for the amazing

← Stock the widest selection you have room for and can reasonably move. Don't forget about early-season gear and other types of hunting that don't use camouflage at all.

pocket/storage options.

Make sure to promote all these sought-after features right at the rack. Signage is a very simple selling step. Make it easy for women to read about features. Sell the sizzle. Signage also helps staff identify key product elements when talking apparel with your female customers. Also, consider putting your female employees in the apparel you're selling. They become walking, talking billboards for the products.

Finally, consider this: A report on Global Hunting Apparel by DataM Intelligence estimates the hunting apparel market will grow at a compound annual growth rate of 5.7% during the forecast period (2023- 2030). That potential growth and opportunities to engage a new customer base are nothing to ignore.

To connect with DSG's retailer division, contact them at [sales@dsgouterwear.com](mailto:sales@dsgouterwear.com) or call 608-665-0303. **HR**









# A Second Chance at Life

Preparedness in the outdoors isn't just about hunting gear. When's the last time you thought about first-aid and emergency supplies?

BY ERIC TOWNSEND, APRN,  
AND AARON STAMPER, EMT-P

**O**n November 13, 2011, Kinney Noe, owner of Curtsinger's Sunrise Outfitters in Danville, Kentucky, joined his daughter Kandis and his friend David for an exciting day hunting whitetails in the great Kentucky outdoors. His farm had several stand locations to choose from, but today he chose the 30-foot stand, about a mile from Kandis. This stand was affixed to an old radio antenna that towered at 30 feet, providing the perfect view of the woods and fields below. Under the mask of darkness, the hunters quietly navigated to their strategic location and excitement filled the air.





### THE TRAGEDY

At 6:15 a.m., now 30 feet above the earth, Kinney decided to stand up and turn to make sure he had clearance for the perfect shot when his trophy appeared — and tragedy struck. For an unknown reason, the stand gave way, and he and his loaded .257 rifle fell to the ground below. Falling feet first, on the way down he struck a tree limb that impaled his body through his right side just above his belt, piercing through his bowels, liver, diaphragm and lung, nearly exiting his back. He lay nearly paralyzed and in excruciating pain on the cold Kentucky ground, able to move only his right hand. Miraculously, he was able to retrieve his phone, which rarely had cellular reception in this area. He was unable to see the phone clearly, but he knew if he hit the “call” button twice, it would call his last contact, Kandis.

Kandis, a mile away, came to his rescue and was able to call her

mother, Rita, who activated EMS response and a prayer chain of friends and family. Two EMS agencies joined to respond; however, the farm was remote and had no physical address. David met the EMS crews at a school close by and led them to the scene, where they loaded the stretcher in the back of a pickup truck and drove the crew to Kinney, who still lay motionless in severe pain, clinging to his life.

Air Evac was activated, and within minutes, the Red, White, and Blue Bell 206 helicopter was landing in the nearby field. Stepping out of the helicopter was a family friend of Kinney's, Aaron Stamper, flight paramedic and now a 5 Stone Pro-Staff member. With the utmost professionalism and compassion, Kinney was swiftly loaded onto the helicopter, and they were airlifted to the University of Kentucky. The vibration of rotors on the helicopter caused the pain to intensify and the agony to continue. Aaron and the flight nurse worked

diligently to stabilize Kinney and provide pain relief. Feeling hopeless as Kinney yelled out in pain, the flight nurse knelt on her knees and prayed during the 15-minute flight to UK. God was also at work. While on the way to the emergency department, Kinney asked Aaron, “Do me a favor and tell my wife and daughters I love them very much if I don't make it through this.”

### TREATMENT AND RECOVERY

Within an hour and a half, Kinney was at UK's emergency department seeking the highest level of care. Kinney states he was given over 90 units of blood, spent over 3 months in ICU, underwent multiple surgeries, became septic (systemic infection), and had pneumonia and irregular heart rhythms. His heart even stopped several times, and he has to be resuscitated. He went to rehabilitation for a month after his release from the hospital. Today, he

## Preparedness Products Checklist

Consider selling med kits and/or individual supplies to let hunters build their own kits based on their needs. Items 5 Stone recommends carrying afield, depending on the need, include:

### Communication Items:

- Radio
- Signaling flare
- Flashlight
- Whistle and/or foghorn

### Medical Items:

- Medical kit
- Tourniquet
- Chest seals
- Pressure bandages
- Gauze bandage
- Triangle bandage (cravat)
- Splinting device
- Emergency Mylar blanket
- Trauma shears

### Survival Items:

- Shelter system (tarp, poncho, etc.)
- Windproof fire starter
- Waterproof fire tinder
- Water vessel (metal single-wall)
- Water/purification system
- Food/snacks
- Large cotton cloth (ex. Shemagh)
- Knife
- Cordage (ex. 550 cord)
- Headlamp

suffers “only” from decreased kidney function, nerve damage to his left hand, and numbness in his feet.

Kinney now travels several states giving presentations at hospitals and churches, sharing his testimony of how he was saved by God's grace and the swift actions of Kandis, Rita and the medical professionals. He states that his near-death experience has given him “a second chance at life.” He



has a mission to help others be aware of hunter's safety, encouraging equipment checks, wearing safety harnesses and supporting local blood drives.

### FOCUS ON PREPAREDNESS

Hunter and outdoors safety is often approached with the focus on areas like firearm safety and boater safety. While these areas are critical to address, we must also focus on being proactive. Preparedness planning is a systematic process that can help assure that outdoorsmen and women have considered and addressed critical safety hazards. This not only includes providing information and making sure gear is available and functional, but it also means also having obtained professional life saving training.

Let's look at a few areas that every hunter should consider to help mitigate the risks associated with being outdoor enthusiasts. In each of these categories, you'll find gear you can stock to help save a life.

### COMMUNICATION

When an emergency strikes, communication is key, and this involves more than just being able to communicate once out in the field with a phone or two-way/HAM radio (although those are important). Lifesaving communication requires a plan informing others on specific activities, locations, dates, check-in times, contact and medical info, route planning, and emergency service activation numbers.

### SUPPLIES CHECKLIST

In Kinney Noe's story we can see how equipment failure of the stand and lack of a safety harness ultimately led to his accident and near-death experience. Kinney would be the first to admit he was blessed that day and mostly unprepared for the tragic ac-



## 5 Stone Preparedness Guide

5 Stone USA was founded by medical professionals to provide training and services to help others be prepared to respond and serve. The company has created a 5 Stone Preparedness Guide to help others become more prepared in the outdoors, which you can download and encourage your customers to download at [www.5stoneusa.com/resources](http://www.5stoneusa.com/resources). This handy single-page document includes a checklist of equipment to carry afield and is designed to be left behind with a loved one when a hunter goes into the field, letting them know who they'll be with, who each person's emergency contacts are, what they're driving and where they're going. Feel free to add areas

to the document to fit the needs that correlate to any given activity. Encourage your shoppers to distribute the guides to those who may be involved in obtaining help for them on their next adventure.

If you would like to obtain professional training or host a training course at your store for hunters and outdoorsman, please contact 5 Stone at [www.5stoneusa.com](http://www.5stoneusa.com) or email us at [info@5stoneusa.com](mailto:info@5stoneusa.com). Our 5 Stone Pro-Staff have real-world experience and have dedicated their lives to service and providing training to individuals and professional agencies.

Prepare, Respond, SERVE!

cident he suffered. A valuable lesson learned is that experienced hunters can fall victim to accidents just as the inexperienced adventurer can. Supplies such as a tourniquet, medical kit, survival kit, signaling equipment, emergency whistle, and back-up communications are all necessary to help ensure positive outcomes in dire situations. Are you stocking these in your store? Are you actively marketing them to hunters and explaining why they should be prepared to treat puncture wounds, gunshot wounds, deep cuts from knives or broadheads, and more in the woods? Help isn't always immediately available, and having a few simple items like a tourniquet and packing gauze can help stabilize a wounded hunter until medical professionals arrive.

### TRAINING

Equipment without the knowledge is useless. It is critical that the outdoorsman or woman obtains professional training and learns how to perform skills and utilize equipment under extreme stress. Knowing how to stay alive in a survival situation and address critical life-threatening injuries such as bleeding are skills that can be utilized in various theatres of life.

Being medical professionals and first responders in special operations rescue, we know that planning, training, equipment and communication are key. Many victims could potentially have had a more positive outcome if preparedness planning had taken place prior to the event.

Every outdoor activity and traumatic situation will vary, and we must be fluid and adaptable. We must understand that preparedness is more than a checklist — it is a mindset which must become habit to promote the safety and well-being of ourselves, family, friends and fellow outdoor enthusiasts. **HR**



# Is the 28-Gauge Just Right for Turkeys?

Sub-gauges are hot for turkeys right now, and the 28-gauge might be king of them all.

BY HILARY DYER

**T**rends are a funny thing. For many years, we hunted turkeys with 12-gauge shotguns, because that's what we had and that was the thing to do. Then the bigger-is-better crowd starting pushing the 10-gauge pretty hard, and many hunters followed. I've turkey hunted with a 10-gauge pump a few times, even killed a nice tom with one a few years back, and while it certainly shoots a more than capable load, the gun weighs a ton and recoils like a beast. It feels like you're running-and-gunning with a cannon slung over your shoulder.





A few years ago, as often happens, the pendulum began to swing back the other way, and the 20-gauge got hot for turkeys. We all started to realize that recoil really is more of a factor than we wanted to admit, and turkeys aren't *that* hard to kill. At the same time, ammo technology was advancing to the point where the sub-gauges were becoming more and more effective, and hunters started looking beyond the 20 to the 28-gauge and even the diminutive .410 bore.

I've stuck with the 12 most of my life, but having suffered a shoulder injury a couple of years ago that left me seeking a kinder, gentler turkey gun, I was eager to try a small-gauge for toms, and my opportunity came last spring, when Mossberg's Linda Powell invited me on a once-in-a-lifetime Gould's hunt in Mexico. Even better? She'd be bringing the guns, so I wouldn't have to cross the border with one myself, and she was planning to bring a couple of the company's new 28-gauge SA-28 Tactical Turkey shotguns.

Having had a nerve-wracking experience involving Mexican customs and firearms years before, I was nervous about traveling South of the Border again, but that part of the trip turned out much easier than I expected. We hunted with Ted Jaycox of Tall Tine Outfitters, and when I tell you that Ted has this thing dialed in, I mean it. I flew into Arizona and met Linda and two other female hunters for our all-girls trip, and we crossed the border at Aqua Prieta with our guides in their trucks. Ted and his guides have done this so many times that the process is a breeze—we didn't even get out of the vehicles and were soon on our way to the beautiful Rancho Mababi, owned by Alice Valenzuela, an American woman who left her high-profile Silicon Valley job



↑ Federal TSS has revolutionized the way we look at turkey loads. A 28-gauge, 1-ounce load of No. 8 shot produced devastating results on turkeys.

decades ago to move to her husband Roberto's off-the-grid family ranch in Mexico. Roberto has since passed, but Alice continues to run the working ranch and allows Ted to guide hunts for Gould's turkey and Coues deer on her sprawling property.

We crossed the border in the morning, unpacked our stuff into a

comfortable casa, set up in a blind that afternoon, and as luck would have it, a Gould's tom marched himself right into our decoy set a few hours later. Though I was secretly harboring doubts about whether the 28-gauge was enough, a single shot of Federal's Custom Shop TSS put all doubts to rest, and the bang-flop at 20 yards was definitive enough to make me a believer.

**WHAT'S SO GREAT ABOUT THE 28?**

"I get more and more hunters hunting with sub-gauges every year," Ted



told me. "That's kind of the trend. Guys are tired of carrying those heavy 12-gauges and the kick that goes along with it. The .410s and 28s are certainly making inroads."

Linda agreed. "I definitely think this trend is here to stay," she said. "We're seeing that pattern in gun sales. You know, the .410 has been incredibly hot, but I think the 28-gauge is going to overtake it, because people feel like they get a better pattern, a little added performance, but still not trading off much in terms of recoil."

The SA-28 Tactical Turkey weighs just 6 pounds with a 22-inch barrel,



a 2¾-inch chamber and a pistol grip — which is a feature I strongly prefer on my turkey guns. It's a gas-operated system that ran smoothly in all my testing, and fiber-optic ghost ring sights make aiming easy, although we added Leupold Delta Point red-dots (and red-dot optics are another must-have feature on a turkey gun, in my opinion). Once you go red-dot, it's hard to go back, and the Leupold was simple and easy to use. The hunter I shared a blind with had another brand of red-dot on her gun and had considerable trouble getting the dot to appear in the darker early-morning hour — a problem I did not encounter with the reliable Leupold.

The bird was the real test (and one of the other hunters in camp killed her tom with the 28-gauge, too), but the 28-gauge has the patterning-board results to prove its effectiveness, too. With ammo availability still somewhat of an issue at the time of our hunt, we opted for Federal's Custom Shop loads, which is sold direct-to-consumer. It won't be anything you're stocking, but when it comes to advising customers on 28-gauge turkey ammo, I can tell you that a 1-ounce load of No. 8 shot TSS (1,100 fps) spits out a nasty pattern that drops birds definitively. Such small shot size is a relatively new thing for some turkey hunters, but TSS (Tungsten Super Shot) makes it an ideal option, as they can pack so many more pellets in a single shell with compromising patterns or penetration. Its tungsten-alloy material is 56% denser than lead and 22% denser than regular tungsten, and Federal's Flight Control wad further contributes to tighter patterns.

Our work at the patterning board proved the point. "The pattern is just as good as a 12-gauge 3-inch without all the recoil," Ted marveled. "The Federal TSS is a phenomenal load, es-



↑ Properly choked and using premium ammo, the SA-28 Tactical Turkey produced excellent, confidence-inspiring patterns.

pecially in this Mossberg. It produces excellent patterns, not to mention what it did to the turkeys we shot this week. I would not hesitate to have a client shoot a bird at 40 yards with this gun, no problem."

Ted ought to know — he guides turkey hunters in Sonora, Mexico (where we were); the Yucatan; and his home state of Florida. He's seen more turkeys shot than anyone I know, and if you have any customers looking to cross off the more difficult-to-find birds on their World Slam or Royal Slam list, Ted is the man to talk to for Osceolas, Gould's and Oscellated. He also guides whitetail hunts in Kansas and Coues deer in Sonora and holds to the highest standards of ethical hunting. Find him at [talltine.com](http://talltine.com).

#### WHY STOCK THE SA-28 TACTICAL TURKEY

Many of your customers aren't getting younger, and they might be looking for more gentle hunting experience. Even if age and recoil aren't a factor,

semi-auto turkey guns.

"The trend is to go smaller, but better," Ted commented, and he's right. When compared to the traditional 12-gauge turkey gun, a light and compact 28-gauge is definitely smaller and arguably better.

"I've been really impressed with the performance, as you've seen already," Linda said. "We've taken a few turkeys this week, and the patterns are really impressive. I think what's nice about it is it's a small, compact platform, easy to carry in



the sub-gauges are just super hot for turkeys right now. The Mossberg SA-28 Tactical Turkey fills the "capable but gentle" bill nicely, being lightweight and compact and undeniably effective. Pair it with a red-dot optic and a sling and you really have the ultimate run-and-gun firearm that you can carry comfortably all day. And with the right ammunition, customers can have full confidence that the gun is more than up to the task within reasonable ranges. This gun carries an MSRP of \$902, putting it in line with many other purpose-built

the field, and of course, less recoil. We're finding with the performance of today's shotshells, it's just not necessary to carry a 12-gauge, and we're seeing the demand in the market for the smaller gauges."

That demand is only going up from here, as hunters learn the advantages and capabilities of the sub-gauges and put down their heavy, hard-hitting 12s. Be prepared by stocking what they'll be asking for — and don't forget to recommend some TSS shot and a reliable red-dot optic as smart upsell opportunities. **HR**







A person wearing camouflage clothing and a hat is holding a large turkey. The person is standing in a field with tall grass and trees in the background. The turkey is held vertically, showing its tail and wings. The person's hands are visible, holding the turkey's body. The background is a soft-focus natural setting.

# Keep Customers Tick-Free This Season

A new crop of insect-resistant clothing can protect your shoppers from ticks, mosquitos and other annoying and dangerous pests this spring.

BY JARROD SPILGER

I love spring turkey hunting, but there's one aspect of chasing gobblers that I definitely don't enjoy: ticks. If at all possible, I try to bag my birds early in the season before these annoying bugs come out in full force.

They aren't just annoying, though. Ticks are also carriers of an array of nasty diseases. Staying tick-free while turkey hunting, fishing or searching for springtime morels isn't just a desirable goal for the sake of comfort — it's a necessity.



When I started turkey hunting over 30 years ago, ticks were an unpleasant reality of the sport. My worst encounter occurred during a river-bottom bowhunt. I must have stumbled into a nest of them, because on the drive home I picked off dozens of ticks, flicking them out the window as I tried not to freak out or have a wreck. It was an unpleasant and creepy experience.

Fortunately, back then, Lyme disease wasn't a problem in my area like it is now. Today's hunters are also fortunate to have tick-repelling clothing and spray options that weren't available 30 years ago. The following are some brands retailers should consider stocking to keep their customers safe and comfortable while spending time outdoors this spring and summer. These items have proven effective at keeping bugs at bay.

#### SITKA

One of the most popular clothing brands in the outdoor industry is Sitka, and the company happily works with retailers of all sizes. Three seasons ago, Sitka introduced its Equinox Guard line of lightweight clothing designed to keep hunters insect-free in warm weather.

Although Sitka's main focus when creating the Equinox Guard collection was tick prevention, the garments also do a fine job of driving away mosquitoes, gnats, chiggers and other irritating insects. The key is a tightly woven textile infused with Insect Shield permethrin treatment that resists bites and repels insects.

This clothing isn't just for turkey hunters, though. I initially tested my Equinox Guard outfit while fishing in July, and I watched as clouds of gnats swarmed nearby, yet avoided me like the proverbial plague. I was sold on the clothing instantly. Anyone who has ever swatted bugs away from their



Sitka's Equinox Guard Pant, Turkey Vest and Equinox Guard Gloves

eyes and face while fishing or early-season deer hunting will appreciate Equinox Guard's effectiveness, too.

There are three items in the Equinox Guard lineup: a hoody, pant and gloves. The hoody has an integrated mesh facemask that turkey hunters will greatly appreciate. The glove has thumb and index finger cutouts for easy operation of shotgun and calls. The pant has internal leg gaiters at the ankle that can be tucked into boots for added protection. This feature is especially important for turkey hunters, as it prevents ticks and chiggers from crawling up the legs.

Equinox was originally offered only in camo, but solid colors were added last season for anglers and others who don't necessarily need concealment.

The Equinox Guard Hoody, Pant, and Glove all come in three Optifade camo patterns: Subalpine and Waterfowl Timber, which turkey hunters will be most interested in, as well as Elevated II for deer hunters. Additionally, the hoody is



also offered in Sitka Black and Coyote (brown), while the pant comes in Lead (gray) and Coyote.

Sitka also offers the Equinox Turkey Vest. Although it's not infused with Insect Shield, it does have a lot of pockets and features turkey hunters will appreciate, and it complements the Equinox Guard line nicely. Vest colors include Subalpine and Timber camo, as well as Earth, which is simply another shade of brown in Sitka's color palette.

[www.sitkagear.com](http://www.sitkagear.com).

## GAMEHIDE

The largest array of insect-repelling gear can be found in Gamehide's vast line of ElimiTick bug-proof hunting clothing. Personally, I've never found a tick on me while wearing ElimiTick apparel. Anytime I'm even slightly suspicious ticks may be out in my area, I'm certain to be wearing an ElimiTick item of some sort, whether it's a t-shirt, cover-up pant, or pair of socks, especially when hunting buggy river bottoms in May.

ElimiTick tops include the



Gamehide ElimiTick gear

## Camo Headgear



While tick-proof shirts, pants, facemasks, gloves and socks abound, I found it ironic that I could locate only one camouflage cap.

The cap is made by Insect Shield. It should be noted that Insect Shield's Permethrin-based technology is used in all the clothing options mentioned above to repel bugs. While Insect Shield works with many small retailers, the company prefers to not sell directly to hunting and fishing retailers in an effort to avoid competing with its brand partners in those categories, such as Gamehide, Sitka, and Simms.

However, none of those brands offer camo bug-proof caps, so hunting

retailers might want to contact Insect Shield directly to see about carrying the cap. Otherwise, customers looking for a tick-repellant camo cap to wear while turkey hunting should be referred to Insect Shield's website, where they can order a cap for themselves, as well as learn more about this incredible insect repelling technology that's used in so many outdoor products. I ordered an Insect Shield cap in Realtree Xtra (Mossy Oak is also available) for myself and plan to wear it frequently while pursuing longbeards this spring. [www.insectshield.com](http://www.insectshield.com)

lightweight, moisture-wicking Tech T-shirt; the button-up Ultra Lite Shirt with dual chest pockets, left sleeve call pocket, and mesh side vents; the Tactical Style Quarter Zip Shirt; the Lightweight Hooded Shirt; and the Cover Up Jacket. Bottom options include the Ultra Lite Pant, the Five Pocket Pant, the Tactical Style Eight Pocket Pant, and the Cover Up Pant that can be worn over other pants. The ElimiTick Bib is also available for added coverage.

Gamehide also offers ElimiTick clothing in women's sizes. The women's ElimiTick lineup consists of the pant, jacket, and long-sleeve T.

As if all this wasn't enough, there's also an ElimiTick glove and facemask for turkey hunters, as well as socks in regular and extra-long styles. A pair of ElimiTick socks should be the first protective item hunters buy.

Most ElimiTick items are offered in both Mossy Oak Obsession and Realtree Edge camo patterns. Each works well for chasing gobblers in spring and bowhunting early-season deer in fall. Solid earth tone colors

are also available in many styles for those who don't need or want camouflage.

Best of all, Gamehide happily works with retailers of any size, with a fondness for smaller stores. "No doubt our best-selling items many of our retailers have the most success with are the ElimiTick Cover Up Jacket and Cover Up Pant, as well as the long sleeve Tech Shirt, Facemask, Glove, and Sock," reports Dave Larsen of Gamehide.

I've personally worn the ElimiTick Cover Up Jacket and Pant for several seasons now, and both work great at keeping ticks at bay. However, they can be a bit too bulky and heavy when it gets hot, so last season I added the Tech T-shirt and Ultra Lite Pant to my wardrobe. These lightweight garments have proven to be equally protective and are much more comfortable to wear in warm weather. Based on my experience last season, I'd definitely suggest adding the Ultra Lite Pant to Larsen's above list. Stocking both it and the Tech Shirt will meet the majority of



spring turkey hunters' bug-repelling needs, especially when those items are paired with a pair of ElimiTicK's socks, in either regular or long styles. [www.gamehide.com/collections/elimittick](http://www.gamehide.com/collections/elimittick)

### SIMMS

It's not just turkey hunters that need bug protection, though. If your clientele also includes anglers, consider stocking some of Simms' tick prevention products.

"We do have a fairly extensive line of Insect Shield items, and we do work with small retailers all the way up to big box stores," said Chris Willich, who's part of the dealer services team for Simms Fishing Products. "I'd say our top items are our BugStopper Hoody and Pant, women's BugStopper Jogger and Legging, and our BugStopper Gloves, Hats, and Sungaiters."

That last item is a facemask that

covers the lower face and neck. While designed to protect anglers from insects and the sun while on the water, the Sungaiter comes in two colors: Woodland camo and Cork (tan), either of which would also protect and conceal spring turkey hunters. BugStopper Gloves are also offered in camo, as is the men's SolarFlex

**"It's not just turkey hunters that need bug protection, though. If your clientele also includes anglers, consider stocking some of Simms' tick prevention products."**



Simms' BugStopper Hoody and Sungaiter



Hoody. Many other items are available in earth tones, like green or tan. As a crossover option that will appeal to both anglers and hunters, Simms BugStopper line of Insect Shield-infused clothing is worth consideration. [www.simmsfishing.com](http://www.simmsfishing.com)

### SAWYER

While all of the above gear is highly effective, not everyone is going to want to spend the money on a whole new bug-proof outfit. For those customers, another option is insect repellent they can simply spray on their favorite hunting clothes.

Sawyer's Permethrin and Picaridin repellents are the best I've tried. They can turn any apparel item into insect-resistant gear. Sawyer also offers Picaridin lotion, which I carried in my vest last fall while dove hunting. Whenever little gnats would

start attacking my eyes and ears, I'd simply apply some lotion to my face, ears and neck. Instantly, the buggers quit bothering me, and I could hunt in peace. The Picaridin lotion also repels mosquitoes, ticks, and other annoying insects.

Austyn Dineen, who handles media relations for Sawyer, says top-selling items mom-and-pop shops should consider stocking are the Permethrin 24-ounce spray bottle, the Picaridin 6-ounce spray bottle, and the Picaridin 4-ounce lotion bottle.

Dineen says stores interested in selling Sawyer products should email sales manager Megan Bigelow at [megan@sawyer.com](mailto:megan@sawyer.com). Sawyer also offers water filtration products that are popular with outdoor lovers, as well as first aid and sunscreen items. [www.sawyer.com](http://www.sawyer.com) HR



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# 5 Most Common ATF Violations

All FFLs should know the five “deadly sins” so they can avoid career-ending mistakes.

BY CAROLEE ANITA BOYLES

**D**o you know which five errors in paperwork could cost you your license and your business? NSSF Consultants Harry McCabe and Judy LeDoux hosted a webinar on best practices to avoid these mistakes on Monday, July 17. During this session, they covered internal auditing practices to assist FFLs to prevent making errors that will result in a recommendation for revocation under the ATF Zero Tolerance policy, along with violations that are most commonly cited by ATF.

“Absent of any extraordinary circumstance, a compliance inspection that results in a finding that an FFL has willfully committed one of these violations will result in a revocation recommendation,” LeDoux said.

## 1. TRANSFERRING A FIREARM TO A PROHIBITED PERSON

This can happen in several ways, and not always the obvious ones. For instance, an FFL may record an incorrect response from the background check; that is, they’re busy and have a lot of responses to background checks, and they look at the wrong background check and write down that someone passed when they actually didn’t. Or they duplicate a background check, and the one they missed turns out to be a prohibited person and the FFL actually didn’t do a background check on that person.

“Another thing is if an individual answers ‘yes’ to one of the prohibiting



questions on the Form 4473 and the FFL doesn’t see it because they’re not reviewing the 4473s,” McCabe said. “They run the background check and get a ‘proceed’ so they transfer the firearm. Then when ATF does an inspection, they see that ‘yes’ answer and they can take action against the FFL.” In other words, the FFL had reasonable cause to believe that the individual was prohibited due to their “yes” response.

Sometimes a buyer lies on the 4473 and passes the background check and the FFL has no way of knowing that the buyer is a prohibited person.

“If it’s a mental health issue, the states are not all up to date with providing mental health and involuntary commitment histories to NICS, so

those things may not get caught on a background check,” McCabe said. “FFLs are expected to do their due diligence, but they are not expected to enforce the law. If there’s nothing in the conversation they have with the purchaser and the purchaser passes the background check, they are not held responsible.”

The biggest violation LeDoux said she has seen was the failure to wait three business days to let the purchaser have the firearm.

“When you call for a background check, NICS will give you the date that you can actually transfer the firearm legally,” LeDoux said. “That date does not include weekends or holidays. A lot of FFLs think it’s three of their business days and they’ll include Saturday and Sunday

in their calculation and transfer the gun. Then NICS may call them back and give them a denied response before the actual transfer date, but they’ve already transferred the gun.” If that happens, ATF will go retrieve the firearm and the FFL will lose their license.

## 2. FAILING TO CONDUCT THE REQUIRED BACKGROUND CHECK

Even when an FFL conducts a background check, if the purchaser comes back to pick up the firearm 31 days later and the FFL doesn’t run another check, this is a failure to conduct a background check. Background checks are only valid for 30 days.

“Many times, dealers miscalculate the number of days,” McCabe said.



“They think 30 days is a month, but they don’t think about some months having 31 days instead of 30. I’ve seen revocations be issued for that error.”

Or a retailer may conduct a background check and forget to record it. During an inspection, this will be flagged as a failure to conduct a check.

“This can happen with a retailer who uses the NICS E-Check System and they have the printout and lay the printout aside, intending to go back later and add the information,” LeDoux said. “Then later, they can’t find the printout.”

### 3. FALSIFICATION OF RECORDS

The big thing ATF looks for here, LeDoux said, is facilitating straw purchases.

“Let’s say someone lies on the

4473 and it’s very obvious,” she said. “For example, a husband gets denied and the wife comes back at a later time and purchases the gun for the husband. It’s important for a retailer to have a system in place to detect straw purchasers, and it’s important that they train their employees to detect straw purchasers.”

Another way a retailer falsifies a record is to change or fill in customer information that the customer forgot to fill in. An FFL can never complete, change or correct information that the buyer is required to complete. ATF views this as falsification of a 4473 because the customer certifies that the information and responses they provided are true and correct.

“I know of one FFL who wanted all his forms to be neat and legible, so he filled them out in advance for his customers,” LeDoux said. “He

would contact the customer and get the information and fill out the form. He was even checking all the boxes or answers to the questions that indicate whether a person is prohibited from possessing a firearm. He ended up having his license revoked.”

### 4. FAILING TO RESPOND TO AN ATF TRACE REQUEST

“A dealer has 24 hours to respond to a trace request,” McCabe said. “If it’s an urgent trace, which often happens in the case of a mass shooting or the death of a public official or law enforcement officer, the FFL may get a call from ATF at 2:30 in the morning wanting someone to meet them at the business premises as soon as possible so the trace information can be gathered quickly to aid in the investigation. The legal requirement, however, is 24 hours.”

### 5. REFUSING ATF’S RIGHT OF ENTRY TO CONDUCT AN INSPECTION

It doesn’t happen often, but now and then an FFL will refuse to allow an Industry Operations Investigator (IOI) to come in and conduct a compliance inspection.

“These cases almost always result in revocation of the individual’s license,” LeDoux said. “When you apply for an FFL, you are subject to inspections by ATF. ATF will typically work with an FFL if there is a good reason they can’t accommodate an inspection at the time the IOIs show up, such as someone dealing with an illness or if a family member is ill and the FFL has to care for them, or something of that nature. But they still have to allow the inspection.” **HR**



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# HUNTING RETAILER GEAR ROUNDUP

## Hunting Boots

Help your patrons keep their feet toasty warm, dry and scent-free with boots designed specifically for the rigors of hunting.

**W**hat could be the best investment of any hunter's life, a good pair of boots is often the key to a successful outing when the weather takes a nosedive or terrain conditions demand high performance. Whether it's a pair of insulated waterproof rubber boots for the duck blind, rugged leather-bound boots for steep mountain inclines or anything in-between, having the right footwear can make the difference between a successful all-day outing or a premature walk of shame back

to the truck. And that means laying down the Benjamins — at least the Jacksons — for high-quality footwear tailor-made to stand up to the rigors of the hunt. More likely, it means owning several pairs for various types of hunts and conditions. As a hunting retailer, that's music to your ears, because every hunter wants to put his or her best foot forward when fulfilling dreams of trophy bucks and bulls, whistling wings of passing waterfowl, upland flushes and all sorts of other hunting experiences. The key

here is variety. While your boot-buying patrons might be looking for that singular boot that will serve all occasions, it's up to you to convince them that it doesn't exist — that two, or even three pairs of task-specific boots are so much better than one that only marginally serves multiple functions. This, of course, means better hunting experiences for them and higher profits for you. Just be sure that yours is a one-stop shop for all things footwear. And that not only means a wide assortment of boots,

but also those accouterments such as socks, laces, boot waxes and oils, etc. that should accompany every boot sale. If you're in the boot business, it's important to have a wide array of models on hand for all types of hunting scenarios, and that you and your staff have the knowledge to help your customers make wise, educated choices — to help them navigate the various models and price points to find those boots that fit their specific needs. Here are eight models that are sure to get a boot buyer's attention.

### Dryshod Evalusion Hunting Boot

Dryshod's Evalusion Waterproof Hunting Boot (\$174.95) features Dryshod-exclusive Dureva outsole technology — a lightweight and abrasion-resistant fusion compound that delivers superior durability and traction while offering exceptional comfort, energy return and stable footing. This means a secondary rubber outsole is no longer required. And by eliminating the need for a secondary outsole, Evalusion boots are nearly 1 pound lighter than Dryshod's already lightweight counterparts. In addition to the weight reduction, the Dureva compound maximizes traction performance with its multi-lug tread design — offering optimal stealth by quietly flexing and bending. This is of great value to hunters, of course, but also to anyone else tackling difficult terrain where superior traction is essential. [www.dryshodusa.com](http://www.dryshodusa.com)



### Garmont T8 Extreme EVO GTX Boot

The T8 Extreme EVO GTX from Garmont (\$210) is a tall boot designed for outings that require waterproof and insulated application. The 8-inch textile shaft with breathable, abrasion-resistant fabric and suede leather upper provide durability, and speed lacing with anchoring ball loop and closed-hook eyelets ready the boots for demanding conditions. An Ortho-lite Ultra footbed adds cushioning and breathability for long periods of use, and Vibram Campiglio tread with a toe bumper provides cold weather traction on a variety of surfaces. The T8 Extreme EVO GTX is available in sizes 6-14 in medium and wide widths. [www.garmonttactical.com](http://www.garmonttactical.com)



### Irish Setter Terrain Snake Boot

Irish Setter's Terrain Snake Boot (\$239.99) features a proprietary Flatline sole platform with aggressive, multi-directional lugs that contour to uneven surfaces to provide extra traction and stability over rocks, ruts, roots and anything else that might get in the way. Lightweight, high rebound EVA in the EnerG midsole provides underfoot cushioning and comfort with each step, and a PU foam footbed adds another layer of all-day comfort. An Armatec rand provides additional abrasion resistance against rocks, sticks and sharp objects. Polyurethane impregnated waterproof leather and fabric panels create a durable upper, featuring UltraDry waterproofing for long-lasting protection and ScentBan to eliminate odors within the boot. Terrain Snake Boots also feature Snakeguard to help prevent puncture from fangs and brush. [www.irishsetterboots.com](http://www.irishsetterboots.com)



### Lowa Tibet Evo GTX Boot

Available for men and women, the Tibet Evo GTX Boot from Lowa (\$420) was designed for heavy backpacking and big-game hunting in rugged conditions. With a fresh new look for 2024, including a new rand and outsole design, this boot gives hardcore users the confidence to tackle the most menacing terrain. With the I-Lock lacing cam and roller eyelets to separate and equalize the lace tension between the ankle and the top of the foot, feet will be comfortable during extended hikes into the outback. The upper is made from Heinen Terracare nubuck leather and the Tibet Evo GTX comes with a Gore-Tex lining, Dual Density DuraPU midsole and Vibram Apptail Divo outsole. [www.lowaboos.com](http://www.lowaboos.com)



### Muck Pathfinder Boot

The all-weather, 100% waterproof Pathfinder Boot from Muck (\$160) is built for life in the muck. Inspired by the flexibility of the Apex Pro boot, the Pathfinder is equipped with flex notches in the front for added comfort and high performance. Its stretch-fit topline binding snugs the calf to keep warmth in and cold out, and air mesh lining improves breathability while the user is in motion. The Pathfinder's reinforced toe tip and heel counter provide durability, while the modified rubber bob sole quickly disperses debris and, of course, muck.

[www.muckbootcompany.com](http://www.muckbootcompany.com)



### Rocky Boots Trophy Boot

With a range of styles, the versatile Rocky Trophy Boot (From \$185) sports all-around rugged features to stay on course through swamps, wetlands and backcountry trails. A durable multi-terrain rubber outsole combined with the Rocky Air-Port Lite sponge PU footbed provides sure-footedness and all-day comfort for hunting and hiking. New styles include a 16-inch waterproof full-grain leather boot with a high abrasion snake guard upper in Mossy Oak Bottomland camo, snake proof protection, Rocky Thorn & Briar Guard and a YKK back zipper with snap closure.

[www.rockyboots.com](http://www.rockyboots.com)



**Under Armour HOVR Dawn Waterproof 2.0 Boot**

Under Armour took its lightest, most durable materials and added energy-returning HOVR cushioning from its best running shoes to make the Dawn Waterproof 2.0 Boot (\$190). Throw in the protection of a breathable, 100% waterproof membrane and this boot is unstoppable. It features a lightweight and breathable synthetic and textile upper with welded overlay for added protection and durability and an external heel counter for added stability. A molded Ortholite sockliner forms to the foot for added comfort, and responsive UA HOVR foam compound reduces impact, returns energy and helps propel the user forward. The boot has a high-traction rubber lug outsole for enhanced grip on a variety of surfaces and is available in UA Barren and UA Forest All-Season camo. [www.underarmour.com](http://www.underarmour.com)



**Zamberlan Sawtooth GTX Men's Insulated Hunting Boot**

The Insulated Sawtooth GTX RR (\$525) is the most rugged late-season hunting boot ever developed by Zamberlan, its Vibram StarTrek II sole laying a foundation of excellence. The Sawtooth is ideal for cold-weather hunting where warmth, comfort and rugged durability are required. Features include a pronounced rocker for hiking in steep terrain, while a stiff midsole transfers workload from the foot to the boot. The Sawtooth's 2.8mm single-piece construction Italian Hydrobloc nubuck leather upper provides exceptional long-term durability and waterproof performance and features a distinctive and exclusive camo color pattern. A full rubber rand system encircles the entire boot and offers added protection against rocks and debris and corrosion-resistant hardware allows for easy lacing and long-term durability. [www.zamberlanusa.com](http://www.zamberlanusa.com)

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BY GORDY KRAHN

# HUNTING RETAILER NEW PRODUCTS

## TYTO HOLLOW BONE REPLACEMENT BLADE KNIFE

Built to better accept ultra sharp and durable H.B. scalpel blades, the Hollow Bone Knife from Tyto is a top-shelf replacement blade knife system — machined from strong, lightweight Grade 5 titanium and used in medical and aerospace applications. A partial carbon fiber handle improves grip between the thumb and forefinger, and the handle also fits

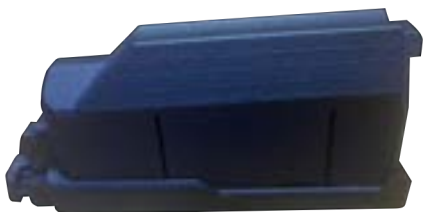
size 60 and 22 scalpel blades. The Hollow Bone Replacement Blade Knife is ideal for boning and skinning tasks, and the strong, durable blades will also perform light EDC duties and camp chores. It is 7 inches long with the blade installed and comes with five H.B. scalpel blades in a Tyto blade box. MSRP: \$159.99

[www.tytoknives.com](http://www.tytoknives.com)



## UBCO 2X2 HUNT EDITION E-BIKE

The UBCO 2X2 Hunt Edition E-Bike is built to handle any terrain and is whisper quiet for accessing isolated areas with minimal disturbance. It comes outfitted to carry more gear with the addition of cargo decks and MOLLE panels and plenty of carry capacity — 335 pounds. The bike was built in collaboration with outdoorsman/professional surfer Shane Dorian, who has been involved in the bike's design from the beginning — with a 75-mile range, AWD and full suspension to tackle the rigors of the outback. Other features include Peak Design phone mount, Barebones Living Japanese Nata Tool, waterproof center carry all, UBCO front and rear cargo decks, Giant Loop Pronghorn straps and a free three-month OnX Hunt Elite membership. MSRP: \$6,499 [www.ubco.com](http://www.ubco.com)



## SAVAGE SINGLE SHOT ADAPTER

Savage Arms has introduced a Single Shot Adapter for its popular Axis and Model 110 rifles — converting them into single-shot rifles. This conversion enables hunters to use Savage centerfire rifles in states that allow straight-wall cartridges (or other calibers) in single-shot firearms for deer hunting. The Single Shot Adapters are available in four versions — one for each configuration of rifle that Savage produces that uses Savage flush fit magazines. The Single Shot Adapter is not compatible with rifles that take ACIS magazines. With these adapters a hunter can use a Savage rifle chambered in popular cartridges such as .350 Legend, .400 Legend and .450 Bushmaster to hunt deer in states such as Illinois. No modifications to the rifle are needed. MSRP: \$28 [www.savagearms.com](http://www.savagearms.com)

## VORTEX IMPACT 4000 BALLISTIC RAIL-MOUNTED LASER RANGEFINDER

For precision shooting and open-terrain hunting, the new Impact 4000 Ballistic Rail-Mounted Laser Rangefinder from Vortex takes the guesswork out of long-range shooting with quick, accurate ballistic corrections — generating point-and-shoot solutions without coming off the gun. Simple to operate, the Impact 4000 is capable of ranging reflective targets out to 4,000 yards and delivers atmospheric and weather data, too. Features include customizable ballistics profiles, on-board environmental sensors, wind bearing capture mode, built-in range card generator and much more. With the Vortex Impact 4000, simply select a preloaded profile or build a rifle's unique profile, then range, dial and shoot. Intuitive to use, rugged and reliable, the Impact 4000 functions in places where smartphones can't for deadly speed and precision. MSRP: \$2,999.99 [www.vortex.com](http://www.vortex.com)



## FORSTER CO-AX XL RELOADING PRESS

The new Co-Ax XL Reloading Press was designed with ELR shooters in mind and is built with the same float advantage, quick die change and precision as the standard Co-Ax, while having the ability to load a wider range of calibers. The press is made to accept 1.25-inch dies as well as .875-inch dies (adaptor lock ring required and included with the press). The steel weldment and 13-inch handle give it unrivaled rigidity and leverage. The addition of ball bearings to the handle and the added lighting feature help give users a smooth and efficient reloading experience. MSRP: \$1,295 [www.forsterproducts.com](http://www.forsterproducts.com)



## DEAD RINGER BLACK SERIES TACKDRIVER CARBON DT BOWSIGHT

The Dead Ringer Black Series Tackdriver Carbon DT Five-Pin Dove-tail Bowsight is constructed with a lightweight aluminum alloy frame, carbon fiber arm and tool-free locking arm knob, offering durable performance that won't add a lot of extra weight to any bow setup. An integrated sight level, adjustable .010-inch pins, fiber housing and rechargeable sight light for low-light visibility ensure accuracy in any hunting/shooting condition, while windage and elevation adjustability allow for fine-tuning for increased precision. A carbon extension arm is available for the Black Series Tackdriver Carbon DT in a 9-inch configuration. MSRP: \$149.99 [www.deadringerhunting.com](http://www.deadringerhunting.com)





### CZ 600 AMERICAN RIFLE

The CZ 600 American Centerfire Rifle is equipped with a beautifully crafted thin-profile Turkish walnut stock and is available in a wide range of calibers, from .223 Rem. to .300 Win. Mag. It comes equipped with a cold hammer forged barrel, and its single-stage, user-adjustable trigger provides smooth operation. A locking five-round magazine allows for quick change-overs from fixed to removable operation. The CZ 600 American also features a vertical safety with intuitive and virtually noiseless operation, and the bolt can be removed by pressing a spring-loaded button without having to disengage the safety and manipulate the trigger. A controlled feed system with a short extractor ensures reliable delivery of cartridges in any position. MSRP: \$849/American; \$1,499/American High Grade [www.cz-usa.com](http://www.cz-usa.com)



### FEDERAL AMMUNITION .360 BUCKHAMMER AMMUNITION

Federal Ammunition has added the new .360 Buckhammer cartridge to its Power-Shok product line — a straight-wall cartridge recently launched by Remington Ammunition. It is specifically designed for lever-action rifles and is deadly accurate past 200 yards. Two Power-Shok offerings include 180- and 200-grain jacketed soft-point bullets. The 180-grain bullet is currently available, and the 200-grain option is coming soon. The .358-inch diameter bullet delivers energy and trajectory similar to the .30-30 Win., with softer recoil for better accuracy in the field. Straight-wall cartridges are now legal for hunting deer in some states that were previously slug-only areas. MSRP: \$36.99/Box of 20 [www.federalpremium.com](http://www.federalpremium.com)

### TRUFIRE RIVET HANDHELD ARCHERY RELEASE AID

TruFire's Rivet Handheld Archery Release Aid is designed to deliver a similar experience archers would expect from a sear-style handheld "button" release without the sophisticated guts or high price tag. The Rivet utilizes a unique link-style trigger system that offers accuracy and performance in an easy-to-use and affordable unit. Its flat-gray anodized handle features optimized geometry and smooth lines, while maximizing hand position for more consistent shooting. The lightweight aluminum body is hard anodized to a matte-gray finish and features an adjustable pinky groove that is customizable to either a three- or four-finger configuration. Internally, the Rivet uses a link-style trigger system that offers one-hand operation for cocking and opening, full D-loop encapsulation and crisp operation upon trigger actuation. MSRP: \$99.99 [www.feradyne.com/trufire](http://www.feradyne.com/trufire)



### ANTLER KING NUTRITIOUS COTTON CANDY DEER ATTRACTANT

Formulated with nutritious cottonseed, Antler King's Cotton Candy is irresistible to deer. Packed with more fat, fiber and protein than any other grain, cottonseed is the ultimate food source for deer from north to south. Cotton Candy also contains protein pellets, roasted soybeans and corn, as well as Antler King's AMP digestive health supplement for increased intake of protein, vitamins and minerals that leads to a healthier deer herd. While powder attractants can begin to spoil within days of application due to moisture, this grain-based mix lasts longer in the field. It can be used with any type of feeder or poured directly on the ground to attract deer from a distance. MSRP: \$17.99/5-pound bag; \$29.99/25-pound bag [www.antlerking.com](http://www.antlerking.com)

### RUTTED-UP COLISEUM ARCHERY BLIND

The Coliseum Archery Blind from Rutted-Up Blinds boasts a spacious 9-foot by 7-foot footprint, engineered to keep hunters comfortable and provide plenty of shot opportunities. Its 13 windows can lock out in any position and are 100 percent smoked but still provide a clear view, even in low-light conditions. The airtight Coliseum's roof has approximately 2 to 3 inches of rigid insulating foam, while the floor insulation measures 4 inches. Fork pockets are integrated into the base, which attach to the floor for safe and easy setup. The Coliseum's steel exterior is finished in Mossy Oak Bottomland camo with 20-year fade resistance. The archery version of the Coliseum features one gun and 12 archery-specific windows. MSRP: \$6,495/ Does not include tower. [www.rutted-up.com](http://www.rutted-up.com)



### ROCKY LYNX BOOT

Rocky Boots has introduced two new styles in its Lynx boot collection. Ideal for hunting and other outdoor activities, where comfort, reliability and durability are a must, Rocky Lynx boots feature waterproof full grain leather and Cordura uppers that resist tears no matter how tough the terrain. Rocky recycled Vapor Pass waterproofing keeps moisture out, so feet are dry and comfortable all day. The Lynx Series features 8-inch boots with different insulation packages, one sporting a Mossy Oak Country DNA upper and 1,000 grams of 3M Thinsulate insulation and the other with a Realtree Escape upper and 400 grams of 3M Thinsulate insulation. MSRP: \$175-\$180 [www.rockyboots.com](http://www.rockyboots.com)



# The Sticky Subject of Drones

Using drones to hunt is a clear ethical (and in most cases, legal) violation. But what about using them in the recovery of lost or wounded game?

BY BOB ROBB

The technological revolution continues at light speed, does it not? There are gadgets available for sportsmen today we never envisioned a generation ago. Cell phones, scouting cameras, computer mapping programs, thermal and night-vision optics, laser rangefinders, scopes with laser rangefinders built into them ... the list goes on. Both state and federal game managers and hunter's organizations are struggling to strike a balance between regulations that prevent technology from overwhelming the spirit and tenets of fair chase and the desire of modern-day hunters to use these high-tech gizmos.

And now there are UAV's (Unmanned Aerial Vehicles), better known as drones.

Drone technology is rapidly advancing. Prices have come down and availability has increased to the point where drones equipped with pretty sophisticated photographic and video capabilities are affordable and readily available. As I learned when living in Alaska and spending a lot of hours in the backseat of a Piper Super Cub, when it comes to spotting game and getting a real feel for the terrain, nothing beats a "vision from above." You can get that same vision, albeit on a much smaller scale, by using modern drones. The questions are, should you? And, should it be legal?

Admittedly, I have not researched every state's rules and regulations regarding drone usage as it relates to

hunting. Those that I am intimately familiar with all prohibit their use when it comes to spotting game, then going after it. Things get a bit murkier when it comes to scouting for game. For example, in Wyoming, it is illegal to scout or use a drone to aid in taking game from August 1-January 31 — pretty much the entire hunting season. A Colorado Department of Parks and Wildlife (CPW) regulation states that, "It shall be unlawful to use a drone to look for, scout, or detect wildlife as an aid in the hunting or taking of wildlife. For the purposes of this regulation, drone shall be defined as including, without limitation, any contrivance invented, used or designed for navigation of, or flight in the air that is unmanned or guided remotely. A drone may also be referred to as 'Unmanned Aerial Vehicle' (UAV) or 'Unmanned Aerial Vehicle System' (UAVS)."

On November 18, 1971, the Airborne Hunting Act was adopted by Congress. The act "prohibits shooting or attempting to shoot or harassing any bird, fish, or other animal from aircraft except for certain specified reasons, including protection of wildlife, livestock, and human life as authorized by a Federal or State issued license or permit." The act states that "the term 'aircraft' means any contrivance used for flight in the air." In today's world, that also means drones.

But what about recovering wounded game? The CPW's Heather Dugan said that, "The bottom line is, if it's

related to a hunt in any way, you can't do it. For scouting, locating, anything. If they fly before they take an animal, they're illegal. If they use the drone to locate an animal they may have shot and wounded, they're illegal."

This is where, to me, the line gets very murky. Some make a very strong argument that it is, in fact, unethical to not use every tool at your disposal to recover an animal you have shot — and that includes drones.

One man making this case is Mike Yoder, an Ohioan who has filed a federal lawsuit making the argument that it is a violation of his First Amendment rights to not allow him to collect and disseminate information on dead or wounded deer he has located with a drone. Yoder started a company, Drone Deer Recovery, which offers to locate wounded deer in more than 15 Midwestern states using thermal imagery taken from drones. In a nutshell, Yoder claims near-100% recovery on wounded deer using a minimally-intrusive drone flying some 400 feet above the ground. Without getting into the weeds, the lawsuit came about because in Michigan, it's illegal to use drones for recovery, with stiff penalties for those who do.

It's easy to understand any state's position that using drones for locating and harvesting game should be illegal. No argument there. But to help recover wounded game? At first blush, this makes total sense. But then you start to see the mission

creep, where abusers, poachers, and shady characters would use this same drone technology to illegally locate, then kill, game. If confronted, they'd simply claim they were searching for a wounded animal that one of their cohorts would swear that he shot but could not find. But given wounding rates — defined as deer that were hit but never recovered — on whitetail deer by bowhunters, which studies have shown that can be as high as 20%, and the fact that it is both the moral and ethical thing to do everything we can to recover all animals shot by hunters, Yoder makes a powerful argument.

In an article on agweb.com, Yoder told author Chris Bennett, "It's like anything else: You're always going to have bad people that hunt illegally, but they will act regardless of the law. The government is supposed to penalize the lawbreakers — not everyone else, too. There will always, always be technology abusers. At DDR, we stand on professionalism and engage in one thing — carcass recovery. We do it the right way and provide an effective and minimally intrusive means to recover lost game. It works like nothing we've ever had in deer hunting history and it is the future for all the right reasons, but the only one that can't see that is the government."

Time will tell. What's your take? Drop me a note at [editor@grandviewoutdoors.com](mailto:editor@grandviewoutdoors.com) and let me know. I'd love to hear from you. **HR**



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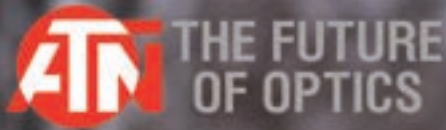
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