



2006 Minnesota Elk Inventory

National
Agricultural
Statistics
Service

Minnesota Field Office · 8 East 4th St. St.Paul, MN 55101 · (651) 296-2230 · www.nass.usda.gov
In Cooperation with the Minnesota Department of Agriculture

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Scope and Methodology

The USDA, NASS, Minnesota Field Office conducted the 2006 Elk Industry Survey at the request of the Minnesota Elk Breeders Association (MEBA). This project is the second survey of its type funded by the MEBA for the purpose of obtaining data on the industry structure and characteristics such as inventory, marketing practices, meat and velvet production and the economic impact of elk production in Minnesota.

The 2006 Elk Industry Survey included elk producers from a list provided by the MEBA. This included 228 operations. Questionnaires were sent to those operators in November 2006. A second mailing was sent in December, 2006 and telephone follow-up was completed in January for non-respondents. Of the 228 reports sent out, 165 reports were completed with elk inventory reported, 10 were completed with no elk inventory reported, 27 refused and 26 were unable to be reached. Overall, this project's response rate was 77 percent. Data in this publication represents information from only those respondents that completed the report.

The summarized results of this survey cover 59 percent of the 280 elk operations and 78 percent of the 9,921 head of elk registered with the Minnesota Board of Animal Health as of October 2006.

2006 Elk Inventory and Value

Survey results summarized a total of 165 operations raising elk in Minnesota. Of these 165 operations, 52% reported an inventory of less than 21 head, 22% reported 21-50 head, and 26% reported an inventory greater than 50 head.

A total of 7,743 elk were reported with an average value of \$1,683 per head. The total value of the elk inventory was \$13.0 million dollars.

Number of Elk Operations Reporting by Size Group, Minnesota, 2006

1-10 Head	11-20 Head	21-30 Head	31-50 Head	51-100 Head	100+ Head	Total
52	34	16	20	25	18	165

Number of Elk Inventory by Age Group Minnesota, 2006

Age Of Elk	Number of Operations	Head	Average Value (\$/Head)	Total Value (Dollars)
< 1 year	133	1,547	822	1,272,011
1 year old	103	1,284	1,276	1,638,864
2 years old	115	1,095	1,644	1,800,112
3 years	120	1,124	2,348	2,638,824
4 years	112	996	2,032	2,024,088
5-7 years	131	1,225	2,201	2,696,420
8-10 years	73	374	2,368	885,456
11-14 years	33	91	806	73,372
15+ years	5	7	392	2,744
Total	165	7,743	1,683	13,031,891

Elk Operation Statistics and Operator Demographics

- ◆ Elk operations average 203 acres.
- ◆ Acres fenced for breeding stock averaged 39 acres.
- ◆ The size of Minnesota fenced commercial preserves varies greatly: 3 operations reported a preserve with less than 50 acres fenced, 2 operations reported preserves between 50 and 300 acres and 2 reported acreage over 300 acres.
- ◆ The average age of the principle operator is 51 years of age.
- ◆ The average operation has been raising elk for 10 years.
- ◆ There were a total of 51 employees hired on elk operations in Minnesota in the past 12 months, an average of 2 employees per operation reporting hired labor.
- ◆ 18 respondents reported boarding elk for a total of 34 other owners.

“Thank you to all who participated in this important project.” Jim Byrne, President, MEBA

Male Elk Inventory by Age Group
Minnesota, 2006

Age Of Elk	Number of Operations	Head	Average Value (\$/Head)	Total Value (Dollars)
< 1 year	110	768	1,071	822,528
1 year old	88	696	1,569	1,092,024
2 years old	100	617	2,094	1,291,998
3 years	100	620	2,658	1,647,960
4 years	93	552	2,885	1,592,520
5-7 years	106	649	3,332	2,162,468
8-10 years	45	154	4,614	710,556
11+ years	7	13	1,030	13,390
Total	161	4,069	2,294	9,333,444

Female Elk Inventory by Age Group
Minnesota, 2006

Age Of Elk	Number of Operations	Head	Average Value (\$/Head)	Total Value (Dollars)
< 1 year	119	779	577	449,483
1 year old	78	588	930	546,840
2 years old	94	478	1,063	508,114
3 years	95	504	1,966	990,864
4 years	93	444	972	431,568
5-7 years	101	576	927	533,952
8-10 years	53	220	795	174,900
11-14 years	29	78	769	59,982
15+ years	5	7	392	2,744
Total	156	3,674	1,007	3,698,447

Elk Marketed for Slaughter

A total of 604 elk, marketed for slaughter during the last 12 months, were reported. For male elk, 77 percent were marketed between 2 and 4 years of age while 61 percent of female elk were marketed between 2 and 4 years of age. An estimated 69 percent were a direct market sale while 31 percent were marketed through a meat animal buyer or broker.

Bulls Marketed as Shooter Bulls

A total of 486 bulls, marketed as shooter bulls during the previous 12 months, were reported. The majority were sold at an average age of 5 to 7 years old. Thirty one shooter bulls were sold to Minnesota hunting preserves at an average value of \$2,690 per head. The majority of shooter bulls marketed were sold to out of state hunting preserves at an average value of \$2,371 per head.

Elk Marketed as Shooter Bulls by Age Group
During the Previous 12 Months, Minnesota

Age Of Elk Sold (Years)	Number of Bulls Sold	Average Score (SCI)
1-2	45	287
3	37	305
4	74	346
5-7	302	363
8-10	24	388
11+	4	D
Total	486	

SCI—Safari Club International Scoring Method

D—Data disclosed to avoid publishing individually reported information.

Elk Slaughtered During the Previous 12 Months,
Minnesota

Age Of Elk Sold (Years)	Male Elk	Average Carcass Weight (Lbs/Head)	Female Elk	Average Carcass Weight (Lbs/Head)
1	8	219	28	262
2	46	392	117	293
3	33	510	106	366
4	32	455	100	383
5-7	17	603	144	429
8+	D	D	37	383

D—Data disclosed to avoid publishing individually reported information.

Elk Marketed as Shooter Bulls by Various Methods
During the Previous 12 Months, Minnesota

	Minnesota Hunting Preserves	Out of State Commercial Preserves	Minnesota Brokers	Out of State Brokers
Percent of Shooter Bulls Sold	6	69	8	17
Average Value Per Bull	\$2,690	\$2,371	\$1,673	\$2,443

Elk Sold for Breeding Stock

In the last 12 months:

- ◆ 41 elk sold for breeding were 1 or 2 years of age.
- ◆ 25 elk sold for breeding were 3 or 4 years of age.
- ◆ 30 elk sold for breeding were at least 5 years of age.

Artificial Insemination Statistics

From operations reporting artificial insemination:

- ◆ There were 363 females artificially inseminated during the past 12 months.
- ◆ Semen was collected from 5 bulls during the past 12 months.
- ◆ Forty five straws were sold to Minnesota buyers during the past 12 months.

Bulls Cut for Velvet Antler in the Past 12 Months, Minnesota

Age Of Elk (Years)	Number Of Bulls	Total Pounds of Velvet Antler Harvested
1	D	D
2	212	2,084
3	197	2,484
4	135	2,058
5-7	144	1,724
8-10	18	159
11+	10	129

D—Data disclosed to avoid publishing individually reported information.

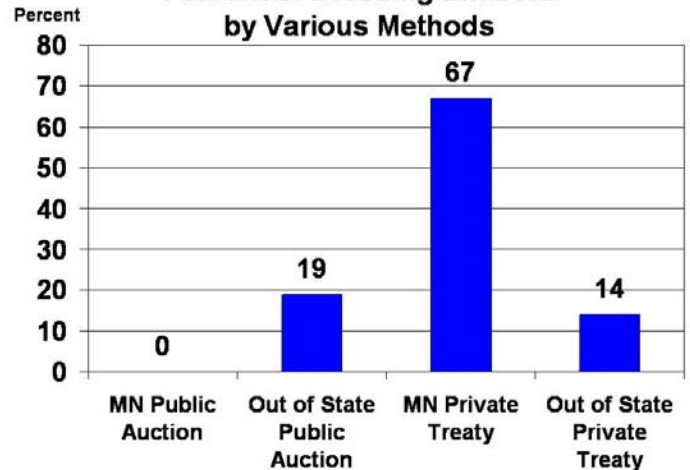
Bulls Cut or Sheds Collected for Hard Antlers in the Past 12 Months, Minnesota

Age Of Elk when Harvested (Years)	Number of Bulls	Average Score (SCI)
1	32	D
2	97	267
3	105	284
4	123	307
5-7	106	372
8+	68	400
Total	531	

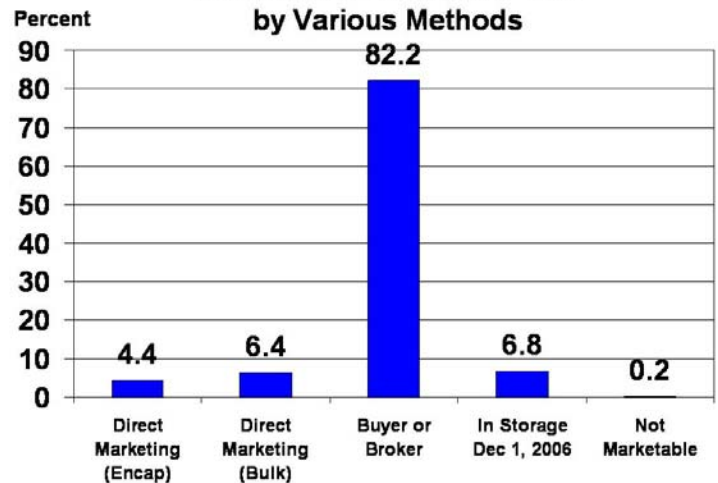
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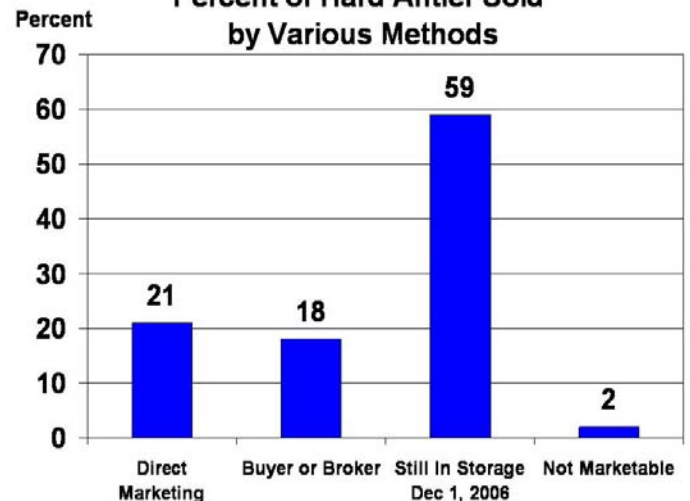
Percent of Breeding Elk Sold by Various Methods



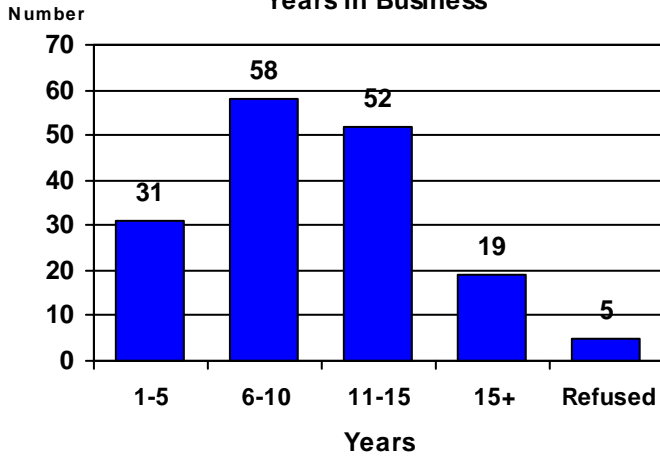
Percent of Velvet Antler Sold by Various Methods



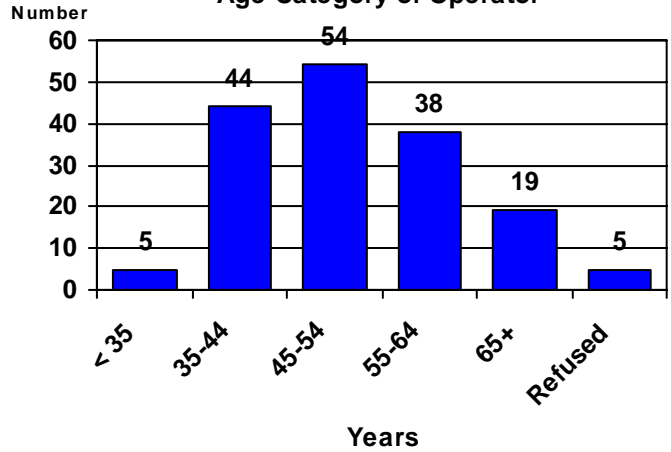
Percent of Hard Antler Sold by Various Methods



Reporting Elk Operations by Years in Business



Reporting Elk Operations by Age Category of Operator



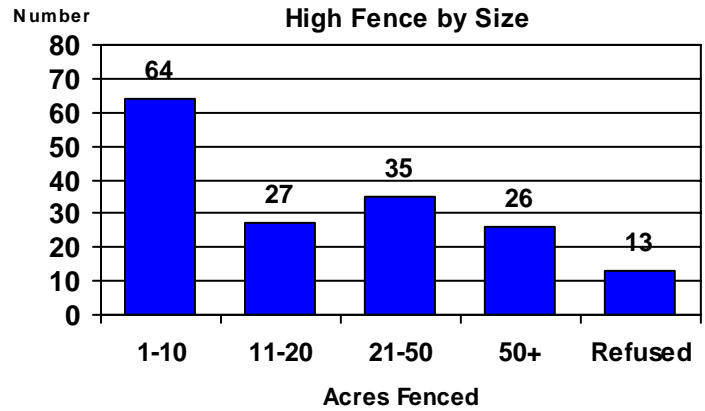
Elk Enterprise Operating Expenses

The largest expenses for an elk operation in the last 12 months were feed, gasoline, fuels and oils, veterinary services and supplies.

Feed expense accounted for approximately 36 percent of total expenditures reported and was the largest single expense reported.

Veterinary Services and Supplies accounted for approximately 7 percent of total expenditures reported.

Reporting Elk Operations with High Fence by Size



Elk Enterprise Expenses in the Past 12 Months, Minnesota

Expense Category	Number of Operations Reporting Expenditure	Percent of Inventory Represented By Operations Reporting Expenditure (Percent)	Total Dollars Reported	Average Dollars Spent per Head of Inventory (\$/Head)
Fertilizer and Chemicals	62	52	112,916	28
Breeding Livestock Purchased	10	5	140,650	341
Other Livestock Purchased	8	3	85,510	365
Feed	129	72	888,160	159
Gasoline, Fuels and Oil	100	67	157,513	30
Hired Labor	27	34	198,691	76
Custom work/Hauling	47	45	103,896	30
Veterinary Services and Supplies	120	71	167,686	30
Cash Rent	19	21	45,140	28
Equipment Rent	13	12	48,078	53
All Other Expenses	84	55	554,555	130