



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

CONTACT: Pegi Adam  
973-744-6090 pegi@mountsnow.org

### **NEW JERSEY FARM BUREAU URGES BEAR HUNT LICENSING**

**TRENTON, NJ** (October 8, 2004) -- The New Jersey Farm Bureau endorses the 2004 bear hunt, particularly in light of this summer's extensive crop damage caused by bears and other wildlife, according to Richard Nieuwenhuis, president of the Farm Bureau. The state Fish and Game Commission has authorized the hunt, however the Department of Environmental Protection has delayed issuing the necessary licenses.

As of today, The DEP website states that "The Black Bear hunting permit application process is under review by the Department and the Governor's office and at this time applications are not available," even though the Attorney General's office has declined to rule on the question. Fish & Game Council voted yesterday (Oct 7) to extend the permit application deadline from September 30 to October 30, estimating that their office has received approximately 2,900 "unofficial" permit applications, pending the DEP accepting them for processing.

The Farm Bureau stresses that the increasing presence of black bears throughout New Jersey and especially in state's major farming communities threatens crops and urges the DEP to make the bear hunting licenses available immediately. "Clearly the Fish and Game Commission's authorization of a 2004 bear hunt is being held up within the DEP for no valid reason," Says Nieuwenhuis.

"An informal poll of our members firmly calls for the bear hunt. The farmers feel we face an increasing bear population that is clearly exceeding its viable habitat, causing harm not only to farmers' lands, but also to the public at large and the bears themselves. In August alone, 30 serious bear incidents were reported and we've had instances of bears on major highways, clogging traffic, endangering themselves and drivers, scavenging around homes and migrating into densely populated urban areas.

Continued....

“Last year’s hunt, the first in 33 years, was highly controlled and yielded just 328 bear kills from 5,450 hunting licenses granted. There is no reason to expect a 2004 hunt to vary much from those numbers.”

Before the 2003 hunt, the *statewide* bear population was estimated at 3,200 bears. This year’s study encompassed only two small areas, *about one-third of the 2003 hunt region*, and the bear population within that was estimated at almost 1,500 bears. The proposed hunt for 2004 is to be conducted exactly as the last year’s, including authority for the DEP commissioner to cancel the hunt at any point during the season if he feels too many bears are being taken. Out of more than 3,300 public comments received by the Fish & Game council, 3,019 were in favor of a hunt; 258 opposed it.

“The consequent damage of excessive wildlife to farmers, homeowners, businesses, public lands and the animals themselves continues at critical levels,” says Nieuwenhuis. “We have to get real and take practical measures to manage our wildlife -- they aren’t about to do it for themselves. We certainly don’t endorse the DEP’s idea of wild animal contraception – a costly folly that could ultimately result in more problems than any hunt ever could; no one knows what effect such measures might have on animal populations.”

The New Jersey Farm Bureau is a member organization of more than 19,000 farmers and farm-related entities within the Garden State. It is the only organization solely dedicated to representing the grass- roots interests and directives of its members in educating all levels of government and the public on the farm community’s policies and positions. The Farm Bureau also takes a lead in seeking out initiatives, activities and ventures to enhance the profitability of producer members and the ensure the viability of agriculture in New Jersey -- *the Garden State for Good Reason*.

For further information, contact the New Jersey Farm Bureau, at The Farmhouse, 168 West State Street, Trenton, NJ 08608. Phone 609-393-7163; fax 609-393-7072; email [mail@njfb.org](mailto:mail@njfb.org); website [www.njfb.org](http://www.njfb.org)

###