



## Food Plot Success Summit with David Fuhr of Hunter's Specialties

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## Food Plot Success Summit - David Fuhr

**David Barrett:** Hello, I'm David Barrett of Trophy Buck Secrets here to thank you for joining us for our final installment in the Food Plot Success Summit tele-seminar series. We've got a great guest on the line for you tonight. Now, here's your host Ralph Scherder to get things started.

**Ralph Scherder:** Thanks, Dave. Today at TrophyBuckSecrets.com we're continuing our tele-seminar series about food plots. But we're adding a little bit of a twist. Our special guest today is Dave Fuhr of Hunter's Specialties. Mr. Fuhr is the wildlife research chemist for Hunter's Specialties and the developer of Vita-Rack 26. Dave will be sharing his insights on the use of minerals for growing big bucks. Thanks for joining us today, Dave.

**Dave Fuhr:** Oh you're more than welcome.

**Ralph Scherder:** And Dave can you please tell our listeners at TrophyBuckSecrets.com a little bit about yourself?

**Dave Fuhr:** Sure, be happy to. I've been a research chemist since the early '70s, so over a few period of years. I grew up in northern Minnesota, obviously. My wife and I have a fascination for whitetail hunting. And so I've utilized some of the chemistry that I've known, and we actually started on our own farm that's now in northern Missouri. And we were trying to figure out how to take a relatively non-attractive buck shall we say and grow it into a trophy. And that's when the research started years and years ago and it's gone a long way since then.

**Ralph Scherder:** How old were you when you decided that the chemist in you would also work in this outdoor industry? When did you decide to blend the two?

**Dave Fuhr:** Well you know I got to tell you what's interesting about it is that I've always had a fascination for this. My wife and I spent some time when we were in Texas and we had some whitetail leases and things like that. I actually got involved with a guy and we developed some whitetail products nutritionally to feed them behind high fencing in particular. And so this has been going on now since the early '80s, so I guess it's been 20 plus years.

**Ralph Scherder:** Oh, wow. OK. So every year it seems like there's an increased interest in deer management. You know we want healthier deer herds, bigger bucks, especially bigger bucks. How important is the use of minerals in the overall deer management plan?

**Dave Fuhr:** If I may, let's go back a couple of steps and then I'll answer your question specifically.

**Ralph Scherder:** OK.

**Dave Fuhr:** One of the first things that you mentioned was of course that it appears as though quality deer management has taken off and there's a lot of people interested in the herd of their deer. And I think we owe a lot of that to the wildlife biologists that have been out there, specifically who study, you know, wild animals and their habitats. And for me I kind of looked at it and thought well, you know, a biologist may know a lot about the physiology of that animal but as far as the

intake of what they're doing and how all that works, quite honestly, from the chemist in me says well, I don't know if they do or not. Chemists use the knowledge that they get to learn what the composition, the properties of unfamiliar substances and, you know, the ability to reproduce and synthesize large quantities of naturally occurring substance, for example, to create these new ones.

That's kind of where Vita-Rack 26 came in. Because what we did basically is we did a blending of biology and chemistry to get the best, which equals obviously in my opinion, big deer.

Now if we talk specifically about Vita-Rack 26, let me explain what it is first of all and why we think it's important in the health of whitetail deer, both does and bucks as well.

**Ralph Scherder:** OK.

**Dave Fuhr:** Vita-Rack 26, the name came around, it was kind of interesting, because, and I guess a person has to understand. The initial development of this product had zero interest in our mind of going to the public market. We developed the product for our own farm, quite honestly. We wanted to grow big bucks on our own farm, it's not a high fence enclosure, and we wanted to do something different. And so Vita-Rack 26, where the name comes from is that there's 26 ingredients. There's 14 different minerals and 12 different vitamins.

And there's a very complex formulation that takes place within this product and it creates something called a synergistic reaction. I'll explain more about that here as we go because bottom line is, when you have these types of product that are there, the total nutritional value for your whitetail herd, you want to gain maximum benefit to that animal's system, which obviously is not just enhanced weight gain, but bigger antlers, better overall health and immune system.

And so that's kind of where Vita-Rack 26 is or came from today.

Now let's answer your question very specifically and that's how do the minerals or do minerals make a difference in a whitetail deer herd? My obvious answer is yes, but you got to remember something. If you're going to talk about quality deer management, part of it still comes down to several factors. One is you have to have water available, you have to have cover, you can't shoot the little ones, and you got to manage your doe herd at the same time. That's all part of good sound management.

The things that we found though is that because of the agricultural processes that now take place across the country in the farm environment and so on with pesticides and herbicides and all sorts of things, there's many times that that deer's diet is affected. And it's affected negatively, not positively.

And how that works basically is like this is that so let's say in a make-believe world all of a sudden, if we could have a super vitamin mineral blend that's like a daily tablet like us humans take for multi-health, boy wouldn't that be grand. Give them the ideal stuff and say just guess, if you took this, voila, it's like the health that us humans benefit. That's what Vita-Rack 26 is.

**Ralph Scherder:** OK. I've read some really interesting stuff about Vita-Rack 26. First of all, I'd like to just ask how is it different from the usual mineral blocks that are often used.

**Dave Fuhr:** Fair question, I appreciate you're asking that because, you know, a lot is out there and it would have been easier for me, and I tried quite honestly, everybody else's minerals. I won't name names. But why did I want to build something for myself? It's because when I did a deer physiology study and I said, OK, what does a deer really need and what can it get in the wild on its browsing and so on or even food plots, what does it really need for maximum health? During this entire process I visited with a gentleman named Valerius Geist. I don't know if you ever heard the name before?

**Ralph Scherder:** No I haven't.

**Dave Fuhr:** He's a gentleman out of Saskatchewan. In my opinion, he is the leading whitetail deer biologist in the country, period. In the United States, in the world, whatever you want to call it, because he's obviously Canadian. And he and I had many, many long discussions, specifically about the genetics of whitetail deer. So what you find is, and I'm not avoiding your question, I will answer your question why is ours different than somebody else.

**Ralph Scherder:** Right.

**Dave Fuhr:** I think what you have to find is that if you're going to take, and a lot of times I keep this as much in layman's terms as I possibly can so we don't get too sophisticated here. But part of it comes down to and let's compare it to calcium. Let's compare it to calcium intake. For women in particular, they take calcium because it helps them with their bones. Well here's what we found though, is that when you start talking minerals and vitamins specifically, there is a specific grade of products that need to be used as well. And what we found is that, and the word would be metabolize, that how it goes through your system efficiently and effectively really is determinant upon the grade of the raw materials.

Let me give you an example. I found that in other minerals that were out there today, they all basically had the same stuff. In fact, if you got to our Hunter's Specialty website, I think we still have up there a comparison list of ingredients that some of the other folks have versus Vita-Rack 26.

And here's what you're going to find is that on the mineral side, my opinion is they at least have the ingredients they need correct. I don't think they have it in the amounts they need correctly.

Let me give you a very specific example. If you look at calcium and phosphorous in particular. Those two levels are many times at 15 to 18 to 20 percent in typical deer mineral that's out there today.

There's nothing wrong with that. However, here's what I have found. It's harder for them to digest that, and what happens is within that physiology that takes place now in this deer, our goal the whole time was frequency of visit to the site. And that's one of the reasons we don't typically use a block, we use loose mineral. And the reason is that way as a deer comes up to that side, and it doesn't matter obviously doe or buck, what you're going to have is, that deer then can consume as much as it wants at any given time as opposed to being limited to how much it can lick off of a block.

So there's a couple ways there, but then the other thing we found in most mineral mixtures that are on the market today, most of them have three typical vitamins that were in it. And they were vitamin A, D, and E. vitamin A, D, and E are all what's called a fat-soluble vitamin. What that means, though, is that it has to go into the intestinal tract to then get them distributed to the body parts that it functions best.

The thing we found is that was, again, if you use animal-grade feed in particular, the deterioration of the effectiveness of those particular fat-soluble vitamins goes away very quickly, like 90 days, 160 days, it depends on how much you put. So most manufacturers what they really do is put double the amount in hoping it will last on the shelf until which point in time that product is sold and then used.

One thing that Hunter's Specialties made sure they did was one of the challenges I was presented with was, if we were to take this product to market, we have to guarantee a minimum of two years' shelf-life on every ingredient. The only way to pull that off, quite honestly, was with food-grade ingredients. So now let me answer your question, specifically that you asked [laughter] , but the question was "Why is ours different from somebody else's that's out there?"

It's probably three answers, the first answer is the grade of the ingredients far surpasses anyone's that's out there. The second answer is that due to the specific blending of these ingredients, the deer return to the site every day, if not twice a day. Which means you want frequencies, like taking a one-a-day vitamin, or one-a-day calcium tablet. You want to make sure they take it every day. How do you do that? You promote it in a mannerism that does that. The third biggest difference is that we also have twelve vitamins, not the typical three.

I think the biggest difference that we found in going through the analyses of the deer, shall we say, what's best for a deer is I figured out that B-vitamins were very, very crucial to a deer's health. A C-vitamin is very crucial to a deer's health. Most people did not use those in their ingredients, and they can't now because we patented the process, by the way [laughter] , tricky, right? So what we did was the B-vitamins -- and a lot of people, a lot of deer biologists will say "Ah, you don't need a B-vitamin because they naturally build it and produce it within their gut bacteria system".

**Ralph Scherder:** OK.

**Dave Fuhr:** Well, that's true and it's not true. The true part of that statement is that under the right set of environment with a proper feeding, a B5 vitamin can be developed by the deer. That's it. We have B1, B5, B6, B12, I mean, and then we have vitamin C in there, for example, as well. So these are water-soluble vitamins, which may even peak even more questions, is what that means is that the minute that this particular coded vitamin, so the water doesn't deteriorate it, hits the saliva in the mouth of the deer, it instantly gratifies and goes straight to the blood-stream, does not have to through the intestinal tract.

**Ralph Scherder:** OK. That's pretty interesting. It is funny that you mentioned two ingredients in particular, was it the calcium and the phosphorus? Correct?

**Dave Fuhr:** Yes.

**Ralph Scherder:** And then I guess it's just human nature to think that if a little bit is good, then a lot is even better. [laughter]

**Dave Fuhr:** Ralph, you are right on target. That's exactly true and that's what a lot of people think, but more is not better in many cases. Let me explain why. If you go our website, I'm sure that we have a chart on there, and we did it as a pie-chart, and it's kind of interesting. I've already used the word once or twice, the word "synergistic". What that means is, what a lot of people don't understand is that with the right ingredient, and we got a couple of side benefits by doing this by the way, but with the right ingredient, if you were to look on our website, you're gonna see this pie chart and it shows all 26 ingredients all the way around it, but all of a sudden what you're also gonna start seeing is lines, and what the lines do is they intersect with each other and they form a particular circle that is a wild picture, quite honestly, but here is what it does.

It takes for an example that most people have no idea that vitamin B12, which by the way is not available in the wild, and also is the number one vitamin used by a veterinarian guy that comes out and you have a sick deer and let's say it's in a penned environment, first thing they're gonna do is that they're gonna give it a shot of B12.

Why? Because it does a whole bunch of things. Most people don't understand, B12 has a direct impact on how the cobalt and zinc, in particular, is metabolized in that deer. So it helps, it's kind of like a booster, and a lot of people don't realize that calcium is directly affected, for an example, by iodine, by vitamin D, by vitamin C, and see so all of a sudden, there it becomes a very complex systematic approach as far as how much can you put in there before you change the efficiency ratio? That's where the real science comes in.

**Ralph Scherder:** I think I understand pretty well now.

**Dave Fuhr:** So you know this is such a heavy topic, Ralph, I'm sorry, I try and keep it as simple as possible, obviously, but I just want you to understand, it's a complex subject.

**Ralph Scherder:** Oh, absolutely, yeah, yeah, definitely, I agree. It's funny you mentioned B12 boosting immune system, right? Is that correct?

**Dave Fuhr:** It's one of the ones that helps, correct.

**Ralph Scherder:** OK, so now there has been a lot of debate over diseases such as CWD or Chronic Wasting Disease. Can Vita-Rack actually help prevent those types of diseases from spreading through a deer herd?

**Dave Fuhr:** In my opinion, the answer is yes. And let me explain how. And I'm gonna say this, this way. Unfortunately, I know a whole bunch about CWD. I started writing papers on CWD and else back in the early 2000s, I think my first one was 2001 or 2002. So unfortunately I am very in tune with that disease and what it is. One of the biggest things that we were after, and quite honestly in our part of the world hemorrhagic disease is probably worse than anything, and it's sometimes called blue tongue, but here is what it is, to answer your question specifically.

It's like the last flu that went through, this H1N1 or whatever it was, and they said "Hey, you gotta get this shot so you don't get this stuff". Well all the shot does is it enhances your immune system.

Vita-Rack 26 does that to the deer herd. It's not just a B12 though, there is a, and here comes this word again, there is a synergistic reaction that takes place within this group of vitamin B products in particular.

We thought from day one when we were developing this, my wife and myself, we thought the whole time that, "You know what, if we do this a certain way, we may get some effects that are a benefit to just the overall health."

I was asked by Hunter's Specialties years ago to come up with a one or two word phrase that says "What does this stuff really do?" And you know that was a tough question, because the real answer turned out, it enhances the immune system and it unlocks genetic potential. And how that is done is that the basic DNA structure of a deer, whether they're in Pennsylvania, or here in Missouri, or down in Texas, is basically the same.

And if we can unlock that natural immune resistance that those animals have, they can ward off a lot of these things themselves, and CWD in particular. Hopefully it doesn't come to your area -- I don't think it's in Pennsylvania yet -- there was a single case that just showed up here in Missouri on February 25th of this year in a penned deer herd, but what we have found is typically this, it's that with CWD in particular, out west, when we were first studying all this stuff, it's found that a CWD is actually created by something that's called a prion, and I won't get into that, but anyhow, what happens is, it tended to go toward a deer's kidneys and a deer would try and artificially, obviously, you know, pee it out of its system [inaudible] word.

**Ralph Scherder:** OK.

**Dave Fuhr:** What most people don't understand is that copper, a specific type of copper within a mineral, has a direct impact on the kidney system of a deer. So we went, when this first started coming out, years ago, and they started seeing, "Oh, no", CWD this and that. One of the things that we did is we increased the amount of copper that we had in there, but we had to do it through a specific method so that it wouldn't affect the elk herd. So in doing all this though, we gained some very interesting insight to deer physiology and their reaction, and what happens when you enhance their immune system. And they just, they become healthier. I mean, deer on our farm, for example, average 50 pounds bigger than anything in the area.

**Ralph Scherder:** Wow.

**Dave Fuhr:** It took us many years, but, I mean, there's just all sorts of things. One of the latest things that we're finally able to talk about, for an example, is even the repellency of ticks.

**Ralph Scherder:** Really?

**Dave Fuhr:** Deer ticks, we have found -- Yeah. You'll love this one if you haven't heard it.

**Ralph Scherder:** Yeah. [laughter]

**Dave Fuhr:** Deer ticks, in particular -- You ready?

**Ralph Scherder:** OK.

**Dave Fuhr:** OK. Deer ticks, the natural immune system, we have found, will not live on a white-tail deer. We have studies across the country that, and we are now able to, we just got permission to say this in January, just so you know. [laughter]

**Ralph Scherder:** Yeah. Alright. [cross talk]

**Dave Fuhr:** We've been seeing this phenomenon for about five years.

**Ralph Scherder:** OK.

**Dave Fuhr:** And it actually helps to reduce or repel deer ticks off of deer. When we presented these facts last, I want to say, October, November, or December, whenever it was, we were at the Quality Deer Management Association meeting in Louisville, Kentucky. We meet with the head biologist for the Quality Deer Management Association. We showed him our facts and one of the first comments was not that they didn't believe us because we had it to well documented, was that, "Oh my goodness, this could affect the tick life-cycle in specific areas". And we have noticed, even here, and on a couple of other farms in the area, that the amount of ticks now finding on deer that are harvested and so on, are almost zero.

**Ralph Scherder:** Wow.

**Dave Fuhr:** Yeah, it's crazy. I mean, there -- We kind of -- and that was written into our patents, years ago, and then we filed a couple more. But one thing about it was that there is a way so, let me answer your question. Again, we'll go round robin back to what you asked. [laughter]

**Dave Fuhr:** Can a product like Vita-Rack 26 help keep diseases from becoming ramped in an area? My opinion, the answer is yes.

**Ralph Scherder:** OK. Really, it can even help improve the health of, you know, hunters that go into the woods, you know, around in Pennsylvania here. I mean, there are just some areas in the state that are just infested with ticks. And I do, you know, help my dad in a taxidermy shop and we see deer that are just covered, covered with them. It's mind boggling that a product like this would actually reduce that.

**Dave Fuhr:** Let me give you one example. OK? On the Hunter's Specialty Farm, here in northern Missouri, they keep pretty diligent records of deer that they harvest every year. They typically harvest between 50 and 80 deer a year off of this, couple of thousand acre or three thousand acre place. And when they come in though, they do things a little differently then you or I would do. They do not gut the deer in a field. They bring it instantly to the house or to the farm. They weigh it. Check the body weight. And then, take a hair comb and literally comb through that entire deer and record numbers of ticks.

There has been, on fifty deer that were harvested last year, three that had any ticks what so ever, and one of them was pretty well covered. Out of fifty deer. Now let's think about this. Now, somebody may ask, "Then how come that one had so many on it?" Well, what we figure is, it was during rut, and he's traveled into an area where he's not been given this type of nutrition program.

**Ralph Scherder:** Right. Exactly.



**Dave Fuhr:** It's pretty crazy. And I could tell you 10 other locations with the exact, similar results.

**Ralph Scherder:** Oh wow. [cough]

**Ralph Scherder:** That's pretty awesome.

**Dave Fuhr:** Yeah. It's pretty interesting.

**Ralph Scherder:** Yeah, and along those same lines, I'm going to talk a little about the genetics of deer because one of the things that I read on the web site is that Vita-Rack can actually change the genetics of a deer herd after just seven years of using the products. How so?

**Dave Fuhr:** OK. How that works is pretty simple. It's that, and I would use the phrase, "Unlock the genetic potential". It's real simple. It's that, if a deer is allowed to mature, now keep in mind that there are at least four things that have to take place to make that happen. You can't shoot the little ones. OK? [laughter]

**Dave Fuhr:** You got to let them grow up and they need food, water, and cover. Now, that being said, is that with the proper -- See if you have the right, if you could provide the right mineral diet, or say, mineral, vitamin diet, everything that affects everything about that deer, affects the food consumption. It affects how efficiently the food is consumed. It affects their health. What if they don't have to ward off ticks, OK? Let's think about that. That gives, that animal thinks, "Oh man. That's a stress period I can do without". Everything still comes back to there's basically four, at least four stressful periods in a deer's life, every year. If you can reduce, even a portion of those, or make them better, can you allow them to grow and change their genetics? The answer is, yes you can.

Now, there's kind of a little bit of a trick to it, you're not going to see it instantly, it does take a few years. Our farm here in Missouri is probably the best example you could ever see because the first year that we harvested here, we had moved here from Texas in 1991. We harvested a eight point buck that year.

One thing that they were doing at that point in time, here in Missouri, is that they had check stations. So if you shot a deer you had to take it someplace, and check it in. And a biologist was there, and they'd age it and all that kind of stuff.

The first deer that came off of this farm that had been abandoned for ten years. A little eight point. Field dressed, probably, 135-40 pounds was aged by the Missouri Department of Wildlife Conservation as three and a half years old. It would score 75, maybe.

[laughter]

**Ralph Scherder:** How could it?

**Dave Fuhr:** A little bitty basket dude. OK? [laughter]

**Ralph Scherder:** OK.

**Dave Fuhr:** And I probably shouldn't have shot it, but yours truly, is the one that did it. What can I say. [laughter]

**Dave Fuhr:** So here we go. So, we saw that. My wife was a very avid deer hunter. She's a bow hunter more than anything else. Now, I don't think she even picks a gun up and hasn't probably, for the last six years. She goes, "We need to do something about this. These things are small. What's going on?" You know? [laughter]

**Dave Fuhr:** So, we started with, that's when we really started on our quest. OK? And we used some of the techniques that we'd learned in Texas and some of those ranches and what they did. And we started building these products. Last year, she harvested a five and a half year old, 186 and 5/8 was her bull, at 10 yards.

**Ralph Scherder:** Wow.

**Dave Fuhr:** And get this. You'll love this. Field dressed 295 pounds.

**Ralph Scherder:** Holy cow! That's a beast.

**Dave Fuhr:** Zero ticks. I shot one this year, it's my biggest so far, we strictly bull hunt, 173 and a half. Again, we have deer that now push, our average four and a half to five and a half year old deer, average live weight is 350 plus.

**Ralph Scherder:** Holy cow!

**Dave Fuhr:** They're just gigantic. It's exactly the same farm, now, 20 years later. I mean, we have 17 mounts on our wall in here, that the smallest one's about 145. All came off of this farm and it's all through proper quality management and growing them up. Taking care of them. Now, if you talk to a guy like Viler Skites, he's going to tell you, it takes about four generations to really start seeing a difference. But, can you affect it? Yes. You know, the old rule used to be, "If you see a spike, shoot it" because it's never going to be bigger than a spike.

**Ralph Scherder:** Right.

**Dave Fuhr:** Absolutely false. Do not do that. [laughter]

**Ralph Scherder:** I think, until they reach body maturity so you can really see what they're going to become. Is that right?

**Dave Fuhr:** Absolutely. Absolutely. Yeah.

**Ralph Scherder:** And that's at, what, three-and-a-half-years old, that they reach body maturity, or ---

**Dave Fuhr:** No, not really. I think they get close at three-and-a-half. I don't think you'll really know what they're going to be until four-and-a-half or five-and-a-half. Now, keep in mind, probably some of the hardest things for anybody to do, and I'm going to pick on my buddy Alex Rutledge for an example, pro-staff guy at Hunter's Specialties that hunted here on our farm a few years ago, and he shot a beautiful ten point, 146, I think --

**Ralph Scherder:** Two-and-a-half years old ---

**Dave Fuhr:** Oh wow, yeah. [laughter]

**Ralph Scherder:** Yeah.

**Dave Fuhr:** Field-dressed 235, and I've given him a hard time about it, and he goes, "Now, it's got to be at least three-and-a-half." I says, "Nope, this is one of our youngsters buddy." He says, "No, can't be. Can't be." So my point is real simple. After you let them grow, it gets really tough to let them walk. [laughter]

**Ralph Scherder:** That's true. Very true. So this isn't just affecting the bucks. How has it affected the does and the fawns that they give birth to?

**Dave Fuhr:** Again, excellent question, because what you're going to find is that any time you have multiple births with a doe in particular, they will abort one of those fetuses if there is not enough food source or water in the area, or if she can't nurse it, if she can't lactate enough to nurse a pair. Triplets anymore around here are not uncommon, and it's because, again, the body weight of the deer gets larger, the lactation flows freer. She can support twins very easily, and they do. Again, one of the things that's really interesting for us -- now we have some live video surveillance capabilities here on our entire farm. So we literally watch deer -- well we could, except I have to work 24 hours a day -- from the comfort of our living room. We don't just use Cuddeback cameras or something like that. We have live video.

So when you see that, you really start to see the benefits of what that deer is doing. And to watch a little fawn with spots on it all of the sudden eating minerals just kind of makes me feel good.

**Ralph Scherder:** Yeah. What is it that enables deer to say, like their first year, have fawns or breed successfully. I mean, is it body weight, that once they reach a certain body weight that they're able to carry fawns?

**Dave Fuhr:** You know, I don't think I know the answer to that, quite honestly. If I had to guess, I'd think it's the maturity of the physical structure. Will it support being bred? Which would be, your comment, probably body weight and so on. I've got to tell you a funny one, though. It was on February 12th of this year. We saw a buck breeding a doe.

**Ralph Scherder:** Oh wow.

**Dave Fuhr:** That fawn will not breed this next year. [laughter]

**Dave Fuhr:** I think part of it is age, obviously, is that if you have a little guy pop out in early May or mid May, the odds are that that December or even January second, third rut, they're probably going to take. Now, keep in mind, contrary to what a lot of people think -- let's say we had a massive 165-inch 12-point out there running around, and he's king of the hill. A lot of people would think, "Well, he's my main breeder, " and so on. That's absolutely not true. You know, a two-and-a-half year old buck will breed if given the opportunity. And they will breed whether they're an antler or not.

**Ralph Scherder:** OK. Interesting. So, let's get back to minerals a little bit.

**Dave Fuhr:** Sure.

**Ralph Scherder:** You mentioned that Vita-Rack 26 is in loose granules.

**Dave Fuhr:** Yes.

**Ralph Scherder:** And how does that affect the way that it is ingested? Or, are the benefits more by having it in loose granules, or ---?

**Dave Fuhr:** What we think -- and we've been asked this question many times, so I appreciate the question. The thing that we find is that a loose mixture does not limit how much that deer can intake. What typically the problem you run into is that -- and again -- I'm going to make two statements. I'll finish the first one here first. So if the deer needs an ounce or two or five or six ounces, they're not limited since it is a loose mixture. OK? But let me throw another curve at you here. Versus the blocks that are out there today, one of the things -- and quite honestly I'm not saying this is how it happens, but it's suspect, is that you mentioned earlier about CWD or other diseases, and how do they possibly pass from one deer to another, and so on -- it has long been thought, not scientifically proven, I want to make that very clear -- that CWD is transmitted through saliva.

If you were to have a deer that's infected, and they were licking on a block, let's say -- let's just say a salt block -- and deer two comes up and licks in the same spot, is there a potentiality for deer two to get deer one's diseases if they have one? Well the answer would be. Of course. And the biggest reason we went to a loose form was purely through consumption.

We measured -- I have 200, 000 photos, I would guess, of deer at different mineral locations. And we measured consumption. We'd have X number of deer come up to the site. We knew how much we put out. We'd go measure how much was left. Nowadays, we've stopped doing that -- probably five or six years ago. But we have some pretty heavy scientific data on consumption. Loose is always better.

**Ralph Scherder:** How much does it take? How much does a deer have to consume?

**Dave Fuhr:** Again, excellent question. It depends on the deer, is the real answer. I'm not trying to avoid it. It depends on the deer. What we have found is that sometimes it's as little as a couple ounces, sometimes it's as much as five or six ounces. Typically I would say per feeding, if we call it that even though it's not a feed, typically an ounce is about the norm of what we have found that they consume. But it's interesting. I have hard evidence of deer digging through the snow, and we had a lot of snow this year, literally digging through the snow to get to mineral. The reason is simple. They know they need something.

Now I will make a statement so we're not misconceived in any way. Vita-Rack 26, all of the vitamins have zero odor and zero taste. They are odorless and tasteless. So the only thing they potentially smell, per se, are some of the minerals.

**Ralph Scherder:** That's kind of -- I'm speechless. What is it that is drawing them to that area to dig through the snow? Is it just knowing that there's something under there that they need? Or is it that they've been to that spot before so obviously they know it's there?

**Dave Fuhr:** Well I think it's both. Again, it's kind of like -- and we'll use the B12 example -- it's kind of like, OK, I'm a doe, I've been chased all over the damn countryside by this big old buck --- [laughter]

**Dave Fuhr:** I'm running around through the woods and I need a break. Leave me alone, you know? I'm kind of stressed out, and go, "Hey! I remember this spot!" It's just like your coffee shop, you know? [laughter]

**Dave Fuhr:** I mean we have them out, we have one site per about 40 acres, and we find -- and we refresh it all the time. A couple times a year we even add some, it's called anthelmintic, it's a dewormer, so I even deworm my deer. So there's all sorts of stuff you can do. They just have to have the methodology to be able to carry it with it.

**Ralph Scherder:** Right. How should minerals be used? Should they be spread out over an area or in a small tile? How do you mix them into the soil? You know, all that basic stuff.

**Dave Fuhr:** OK -- what I typically do, and again I think we have some pretty good information on our website about this, but I think one of the biggest things that we try and say is, if you go to an area -- and a lot of people say, "Well how do I know where to start this?" Well if you had a salt block there, just take the salt block out and use this in the exact same location, OK? Now let's say you're going to start something new. The best thing to do is maybe on the edge of a field -- do not do this on a levee at a pond, because they will eat a hole and it will break.

[laughter]

**Ralph Scherder:** There goes the pond. [laughs]

**Dave Fuhr:** Now, in case you missed something there, that's called sheer experience there, my friend. [laughter]

So anyhow as we go forward, what you do at the edge of a field, maybe you've got three or four trails that are kind of coming together, and just dig a hole out a little bigger than the size of a basketball, let's say two or three feet around.

Dig the soil up, throw it on the side and then what you do is -- let say you start out with a five pound bag. And we normally use five pound as the initial one to utilize, to start going forward, OK.

So take half of that five pound bag, mix it in the soil that you've turned over, throw the sod out of the way. And then what you do is mix it all up, take the remaining half of the five pound bag, put it on the top and walk away.

**Ralph Scherder:** OK.

**Dave Fuhr:** Do you have a power point that I have done in the past? Was that ever sent to you?

**Ralph Scherder:** No. Never.

**Dave Fuhr:** OK. I will forward this to you because there's some interesting pictures. It's a whole lot more than we even -- I know we've probably gone way over our 15 minutes anyhow.

**Ralph Scherder:** Oh, no. It's fine.

**Dave Fuhr:** You get me talking about white-tail deer and I just don't shut up. [laughs]

**Ralph Scherder:** That's awesome though. I'm learning all kind of great stuff. Terms like, syner-, what is it?

**Dave Fuhr:** Synergistic reaction.

**Ralph Scherder:** Yeah. I'll be saying that all day.

**Dave Fuhr:** There you go.

**Ralph Scherder:** All of this stuff is just really fascinating to me. So once you've set off the initial location for the mineral, how often should it be renewed?

**Dave Fuhr:** Again, good question. Typically, we will tell you every 60 days. There are two or three questions that typically come up in this exact same question. And for us it kind of depends on how big your herd is. If you have on a mineral site and you go out there, and all of a sudden, it's been out a week. You go out. Well, they'll find it really quick.

I have an older brother that did this experiment in the deep woods of Northern Minnesota. I'll send you a picture of this gigantic buck standing in this hole that is now two and half feet deep. When you see they're kind of pounding at you, you may need to refresh it a little more often.

**Ralph Scherder:** [laughing] Maybe include a stepladder in there for them to get out.

**Dave Fuhr:** Well, and sometimes I know at Dave Forbes farm, the guy that's the CEO or co-CEO of Hunter Specialties, they got to the point that every couple years that have to fill them in.

**Ralph Scherder:** Wow.

**Dave Fuhr:** Until you experience what I call the Vita-Rack experience, you just cannot believe how this makes a difference.

**Ralph Scherder:** That's amazing stuff. You mentioned that you should have one for every 40 acres? One location?

**Dave Fuhr:** Yeah. And again, that's deer populated. It kind of depends what you do. And a lot of times I have people ask me, "I hunt on public ground, why should I spend the money and do that?" It's all about your own conscience and how you feel yourself about deer management.

**Ralph Scherder:** OK. And that kind of leads me to another question. This might be kind of a tricky one. Anything involving ethics always is, but what's the different between baiting and using minerals?

**Dave Fuhr:** Oh, actually that's an easy question. What it is, the bait is a food source that they have to have to live. Mineral is not.

**Ralph Scherder:** OK. So it's more like you're an attractant. Is that right or is it --

**Dave Fuhr:** Well, no. Because there's a lot of attractants that are out there that are bait-related. It is just one of the many puzzles on how to take care of a complicated animal like white-tail deer. It's a separate tool in your arsenal shall you say. I know that there's some states, Missouri's one, that allows you to hunt over mineral sites but not over bait.

**Ralph Scherder:** Oh wow. That's kind of interesting.

**Dave Fuhr:** In our years, classified and recognized that it's not a necessary ingredient for that deer to stay alive. They think food and water is that. OK? And mineral is not. Now, of course what I know is that if I want them to be bigger, and healthier, and live longer, and all that kind of stuff, I'm going to put mineral out. Now there is a downside to using Vita-Rack 26, and maybe we should discuss this.

**Ralph Scherder:** That was my final question.

**Dave Fuhr:** What's the downside?

**Ralph Scherder:** If there are any, yes. What is it?

**Dave Fuhr:** Well, the best thing I have found as a bow hunter, these deer get so big they are hard to kill. I can tell you, you better put a perfect shot on them suckers, or you're not going to kill them because they're really healthy. [laughing]

**Ralph Scherder:** Magnum rifles and huge bows.

**Dave Fuhr:** And we laugh and chuckle about it. Every year, every year, I'll have a guest come in and do some hunting on us and so on. Notoriously they'll shoot a deer and they think it's a perfect shot, and hopefully we'll find it by the next day. I'm going to share one story with you, and then I'm going to get off your phone. OK? Here you go. So this last year -- now my wife and I could never hunt in the same stand together, especially bow hunting, which is all we really do. And the reason is simple.

She sits there still a mouse. And me, I take my video camera with me to this stand just to video what I'm seeing and letting walk by and whatever. OK?

So I kind of move around a little bit. But you know we all watch all these hunting show nowadays and Outdoor Channel, and all those places, and these guys are always waiting for the perfect shot.

I'm kind of like, "I'd have that deer gutted and hanging in a tree already man. What are you waiting on?"

Now you never thought that I'm sure, OK.

**Ralph Scherder:** No, no.

**Dave Fuhr:** You don't even have the answer. I already know the answer. [laughs] So my point is that everybody always waits until they stop. So this past year I'm sitting in a stand, it's October 4th, very early for us. I've been watching these couple bucks in particular that were pretty good size, and I am sitting in the stand one evening.

Had a bunch of does come by me, and a couple small bucks, and all of sudden I looked to my left, and I'm like, "My God, it's a full grown horse coming up the path and it's got antlers." [laughs]

And I said when it gets to this opening I'm going to shoot him. He got to that opening, I did not go eh, and stop him. And I shot, and instead of double lungs, I had a liver shot.

I did find him the next day. I was fortunate enough to have him featured in Bow Hunter magazine, Petersen's Bow Hunter magazine. In the January issue you'll see a picture of it. Nice big deer.

But I'm telling you from experience, you have a huge animal on the hoof, 350-pounder, it looks like a horse out there in front of you. Make sure you put a good ethical shot on him.

**Ralph Scherder:** That's great advice.

**Dave Fuhr:** That's my Vita-Rack story and I'm sticking to it. [laughs]

**Ralph Scherder:** Well it has been a pleasure talking to you today Dave.

**Dave Fuhr:** Anytime Ralph.

**Ralph Scherder:** For our listeners who would like to learn more about Hunter Specialties and Vita-Rack 26, can you give us your website address?

**Dave Fuhr:** Yes, absolutely, [www.hunterspec.com](http://www.hunterspec.com). We've got deer nutritional products. We've got all sorts of new stuff coming out by the way.

**Ralph Scherder:** OK. Such as? Anything new in the Vita-Rack line?

**Dave Fuhr:** Well there's whole series of Vita-Rack products. We have a new product coming out called Vita-Rack Gorge. We wanted to use the word stampede because when we feed it here, it's like a stampede. But that name was already taken so we couldn't. So Vita-Rack Gorge is the new one coming out. We're actually doing some pellets now for some of the deer ranchers and particular people that seed. And all of these products have Vita-Rack 26 in it.

It's all about consumption, enhancing the immune system. Let's make our deer herd healthy so people stop trying to ban it all.

**Ralph Scherder:** Great. And thanks again for joining us.

**Dave Fuhr:** Great Ralph, anytime.

**Ralph Scherder:** And thank you to all the folks who've been listening to this installment of the Trophy Bucks Secrets Teleseminar Series. I'm Ralph Scherder, and once again here's David Barrett founder of [TrophyBuckSecrets.com](http://TrophyBuckSecrets.com).

**David Barrett:** Thank you Ralph. And thanks to you Dave. And a very special thanks to all of you who have shared your kind words with me about this project. I am looking forward to hearing your food thoughts success stories this year. It's been my pleasure to put this together for you. If you're serious about hunting big bucks then you owe it yourself to check out [TrophyBuckSecrets.com](http://TrophyBuckSecrets.com) now.



I'm looking forward to welcoming you to the Ultimate Big Buck Brotherhood, Trophy Nation, only at [TrophyBuckSecrets.com](http://TrophyBuckSecrets.com). Thank you and goodbye for now.

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