

# 10 REASONS TO KEEP HUNTERS OFF YOUR LAND

- 1** Hunters, whether on foot or horseback, are a major threat to the biosecurity of your farm. Dozens of farms may be crossed during the course of a hunt. Diseases can be carried long distances on the clothing and footwear of hunters, on horses' hooves, on the hounds and on hunt vehicles.
- 2** Hunts scatter sheep and cows when they come through your farm with their horses and hounds. The result can be stressed animals, miscarriages, injuries and death. Fields of crops are also at risk.
- 3** If hunters have no insurance or insufficient insurance, you may be held liable for injuries they sustain while on your property. Saying yes to hunters could prove extremely costly.
- 4** When horseback hunters plough through your farm boundaries, or leave gates opened behind them, the result may be livestock escaping into neighbouring farms or on to public roads.
- 5** Pastures are very vulnerable to poaching and not just when they are wet. According to an article in the Irish Farmers' Journal, "plots that had been severely damaged in the autumn produced over 70 per cent less grass the following spring compared to plots that were not damaged."
- 6** Wildlife experts, the Department of Agriculture and the National Parks and Wildlife Service, all agree that foxes do not pose a significant threat to farming interests. The major threat comes from the hunters who get their kicks from chasing and killing wildlife on your property. Most farmers recognise the fox as a friend who helps keep down the numbers of rabbits and rodents.
- 7** Farm dogs and pets are at risk during hunts. Among the victims are a sheep dog in Galway which suffered injuries to its hind quarters, back and paws after being attacked by a pack of foxhounds. Beloved farm pets have also been attacked by hounds and ripped apart.
- 8** Hunts pose a risk to children on your farm. In 2009, the Vice-President of the European Parliament's Intergroup on Family and Child Protection called on the Minister for Agriculture to ban hunting with hounds. Referring to hound attacks on pets and public fears for child safety, Kathy Sinnott, MEP said she was "greatly concerned that, if action is not taken, such attacks could result in the death of a child."
- 9** Hunters are responsible for horrific cruelty to animals. Foxes, hares and rabbits are chased to exhaustion and ripped apart. Foxes that try to escape underground are dug out and thrown to the hounds. The use of ferrets can leave rabbits blinded and mauled before they're killed.
- 10** Struggling farmers are exploited by wealthy, money-grabbing hunters. Did you know that hunts charge participants up to 150 Euro each for a day's hunting. They take the financial benefits while you endure the risks to your livelihood. Please read on to find out how to make your land off-limits to hunters.

## HOW TO KEEP HUNTERS OFF YOUR LAND

**In advance of the hunt season, send a warning-off letter by registered post to all hunt masters in your area. You may also wish to put a notice in your local newspaper to highlight that your land is strictly off-limits. These are both optional - hunters have no right to enter lands without permission and it is unacceptable for them to claim that they didn't know that your lands are private and preserved.**

Immediately contact the Gardai if members or followers of the hunt trespass on your land. Under the Control of Dogs Act, dogs must be kept "under effectual control" so if hunt hounds come on to property where they do not have permission to be, the Gardai should be notified. Try and take photos or video footage as evidence.

Contact the Gardai also if there is a breach of Section 44 of the Wildlife Act. This makes it an offence for any person who is not the owner or occupier of land to carry onto that land, without permission, any firearm, net, or other weapon, instrument or device capable of being used for hunting a wild bird or a wild animal.

If trespass occurs, ascertain the name of the hunt and the person in charge. Have the damage independently assessed and contact your solicitor with a view to seeking compensation. Avoid accepting an informal apology from the hunt or "off the record" payment as this is unlikely to stop further trespass.

For more information, click on "Farmers" at [www.banbloodsports.com](http://www.banbloodsports.com). Please print and share with neighbours.