

SPAM ARE PLENTIFUL THIS YEAR

Jim Sullivan

According to our state's DNR (Department of Natural Resources), there's lots of Spam roaming the woods this year. Seems that the No-Hunting-Spam restriction placed on game hunters during the past year has worked out well. But now there's an overabundance of the animal. And their numbers must be thinned, and soon.

If that isn't done, they'll soon be overgrazing and the first thing you know, the flora will be stripped bare. For as everyone knows, Spam will eat anything (except other Spam) that grows in the wild, which could set forested areas back several seasons of growth. So this is a prime year to go after Spam. As usual, a hunter is limited to bag one Spam, and it must be a male. The hunter, as ever, must obtain a special permit with the normal hunting license.

My oldest son, Dan, is a Spam hunter. Using his trusty .12 gauge shotgun loaded with double aught buckshot, he went over to Grover's Woods the other day and with the help of his Spam dog, Roscoe, shot a nice, 12-point buck Spam. Dan drilled him behind and to the left of the old cider mill (and, incidentally, right above the Spam's eyeball). The animal was so big, my son needed the help of two men and a boy to drag the Spam out of the woods.

To bring the animal home, my son tied the Spam to his (my son's) pickup's right front fender. Then he drove back and forth through town honking his horn so everyone would come out and look. People were oohing and aahing from the railroad tracks to the grain elevator and back again.

The Spam's head would have made an ideal trophy, but Dan already had 14 of them mounted by Sam Duckett, the community Taxidermist, and on the wall over the acetylene and oxygen tanks at the welding shop where Dan works. So, this year, he decided to have the Spam's hide tanned and made into a leather coat. Admittedly, its natural brindle color is a bit off-putting. It kind of reminds you of mustard. But once you get used to seeing it, especially before lunch, it won't make you sick anymore.

Naturally, my son gutted the animal and butchered up the Spam meat. He freezes it and stores it in the local food locker downtown next to the funeral home. Thanks to my son's generosity, we had the best, most expensive Spam cut for Thanksgiving. And we ate the next best one for Christmas. Spam, by the way, is our traditional holiday entree. You can't beat it, even with a stick. Last year, of course, what with the scarcity and all, we had to eat canned Spam. But it was still Spam.

Dan knows that a lot of folks hereabouts don't particularly like the gamey taste of wild Spam (this may be the only variety, for you never hear of a tame Spam in someone's back yard or at the zoo). He (my son), then, mixes it with several different types of sausage. This goes a long way toward making the Spam edible, not to mention digestible.

My missus, for one, won't touch Spam unless it's doctored a whole bunch. And that includes changing the flavor and sight of the stuff. That's why she serves it under wraps. Seldom do guests know what they're getting to eat until it's too late. Their anger, however, soon passes along with other things.

At this time, as on all Thanksgivings, we gave thanks to the One above for the wonderful Spam and all the trimmings.

And speaking of that, I'm not a big fan of Spam giblets. My spouse knows that and fixes a nice, highly seasoned, chestnut dressing she learned from my dear departed mother to prepare. Mom's gone but her dressing stayed behind. The missus stuffs it (the dressing) into the Spam for cooking and doctoring. Not necessarily in that order. This way I don't have to worry about eating Spam gizzards, etc. What's more, this dressing goes a long way in helping to disguise the taste, shape, and consistency of this Spam, too.

My old man who lives with us just loves Spam, cooked or raw. But he is a hardy soul. He credits

his longevity to this unique meat. He'll be 65 next October. He's eaten Spam twice a week since World War II. On the other hand, his wife, my dear mother, dropped dead after a big Thanksgiving Spam dinner a short ten years ago. And she was only 54. We don't know what actually killed her, but the autopsy did find two chestnuts blocking her air passage.

Perhaps the best part of a Spam holiday dinner is making sandwiches from leftovers. I could eat cold Spam sandwiches, smothered with salad dressing, every night for the rest of my life. These sandwiches make for a delicious, energy-packed snack just before bed. And you can fry Spam with your eggs for breakfast, too. No matter when I ingest Spam, I always feel better afterwards.

My only fear now is that the Spam population will be overhunted again. Then before you know it, hunting restrictions will have to be placed on this wonderful game anew.

And our Spam eating will likely drop. Maybe we voters ought to pass the new DNR-suggested regulation to limit hunting Spam to bow and arrow hunters. At least that way the poor animal would have a sporting chance at surviving.

Whatever is decided, let's make every effort to keep the Spam herds thriving. But never fear, Spam's always near – in a can. Try some, you just might like it!