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I am currently looking at putting a portable clay target thrower on my farm. We own a property that is several hundred hectares and where we will shooting is probably at least 500 metres from the nearest neighboring boundary. What I am wondering is exactly how far I should actually leave as a safety template? How far will my shot travel?

Harold Ireland, Launceston, TAS

There is a legal safety fall out area template (this may vary from State to State) of 273 metres or 300 yards in the old scale. According to data available from Remington in the United States 32 grams of number 7.5 shot with a muzzle velocity of 1250 feet per second aimed at 33 degrees above the ground at sea level with no wind will travel 191 meters. Wind and altitude will have some effect on this, but generally not more than 15% at altitudes below 1,500 meters. Interestingly varying muzzle velocities of up to 200 feet per second either side of this standard have little impact shot distance either. I have no idea why 33 degrees is the maximum angle instead of what I logically would have assumed to be 45 degrees, but I have no doubt the people at Remington know this better than myself.

In Europe it is very common these days to see artificial backgrounds created with green heavy duty mesh shade cloth. They normally stand at up to 10 to 15 metres high and are at a distance of 120 metres from the shooting stations. The shade cloth are hung at up to 45 to 60 degrees back to the ground so they may cover an extra 10 to 20 metres closer to the shooting position. This practice has not only increased target recognition but it has also been able to catch an amazing amount of shot before it hits the earth. This has tremendous financial as well as environmental reward for the shooting ranges that adopt this practice. I have no doubt it is a practice we will see happen more often here in Australia especially at ranges that own their own fall out zones and are lucky enough to have access to developers looking to dump clean dirt which will help build a mound which can act as the backstop for the shade cloth.

Questions: russell@russellmark..com.au