



MINNESOTA ELK BREEDERS ASSOCIATION

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE Position Statement

Cervid Farming Regulations

Minnesota farmed cervid producers, including cervid harvest preserves, are heavily regulated, more than any other livestock industry in Minnesota.

- Mandatory registration of all animals on farm
- Report all interstate and intrastate movement of animals (including slaughter and on-farm deaths) within 14 days to BAH
- Annual inspection of fence, facilities and animals
- Two ID's required (large dangle tag and official federal tag)
- Importation of animals only from farms/ranches in Level 6 CWD status (more than 5 years CWD surveillance) which are not located in or near a known CWD endemic area; must also be from a TB accredited herd or herd test TB negative within last 365 days
- In the event of escape, if the animal is not recaptured within 24 hours, the DNR must be notified
- EVERY cervid death is required to be tested for CWD. This has been happening for **over 15 years**
- **Minnesota elk and deer farmers CWD test an average 13% of the total farmed cervid inventory every year.**
- BAH has already enacted most recommendations from the OLA report presented in April 2018

Cervid Farms Are NOT the CWD Risk Vector

- Epidemiology reports from the most recent CWD cases in Winona and Crow Wing counties identify taxidermy as the most likely vector of CWD to the Winona county infected farm. In the Crow Wing case, a rubbish dump site where bones were commonly observed which was fenced in two years before CWD positive does were identified in that pen is a possible vector. The federal CWD program is working. (Exhibits 1 & 2)
- A 2018 study by the Quality Deer Management Association showed that in the 2016-2017 hunting season, more than 32,000 whitetails were killed by hunters in the four Wisconsin counties with the highest incidence of CWD in the state. These deer were harvested by hunters from 49 states. The Wisconsin DNR reported that only 2,291 of those deer were tested for CWD before they left the state. Of those 2,291 deer alone, 17 percent were CWD positive. This demonstrates the extremely high likelihood of carcass movements spreading CWD
- Existing hunter harvested carcass movement restrictions are not easily enforced or monitored
- Taxidermy waste stream, which is currently not monitored, is a vitally important risk factor
- Statistical results from the Elk Research Foundation studying Minnesota CWD testing of farmed and wild cervids concluded that for the farmed cervid population, there was a greater than 99.9% confidence the prevalence of CWD was 1% or less based on testing results. In the wild deer population, *"Many DPAs remain unsampled, and with the exception of a few more heavily-sampled DPA's, we have scant information and cannot make any precise conclusions about CWD rates in free-ranging deer."* (Exhibit 3)

Cervid Farms Are the Key to Finding a Cure

- Genome research to identify genetically CWD resistant animals
- Studies on soil resistance to CWD prions
- Live animal testing
- CWD research is ongoing throughout all of North America from Alberta to Saskatchewan to Colorado, Wyoming, Texas, Arizona, Minnesota and many other areas to develop answers to controlling the spread of CWD. Cervid farms provide the optimal testing medium to accomplish these research initiatives

We Support

- Additional funding of the BAH to continue their great work
- Funding of \$1,800,000 for the University of Minnesota to develop a live CWD test
- Depopulation of a CWD positive facility, only with indemnity
The average Minnesota elk herd size is 38 animals. Taking animals without indemnity would take assets valuing over \$100,000 from the average elk farmer plus make the producer pay for the taking and disposal by the state which would be substantial cost to a small farmer, this after most assets have been taken away.
- Further examining hunter carcass movement and taxidermy waste stream as vectors for CWD transmission and developing new laws to mitigate these risk factors
- Increased hunter education about properly transporting and disposing of hunter harvested carcasses