CERVID PARTS IMPORTATION BAN

To help prevent CWD from being spread within the state, the Game Commission has banned the importation of specific carcass parts from states and Canadian provinces where CWD exists including any Disease Management Areas within Pennsylvania. A list of states and provinces affected by the ban is available at http://bit.ly/PGC-CWD or by calling your Game Commission region office.

What is being done to manage CWD in Pennsylvania?

Several state and federal agencies, including the Game Commission, Pennsylvania departments of Agriculture (PDA), Health (PDH), and Environmental Protection (DEP), and U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) completed a response plan, which details methods of prevention, surveillance, and response designed to manage CWD. Activities designed to reduce the risks associated with this disease are ongoing. Surveillance for CWD and other diseases began in Pennsylvania in 1998 and will continue in order to understand the prevalence and distribution of the disease.

What can I do to help?

Do not feed deer or elk. Supplemental feeding causes deer and elk to concentrate, which facilitates the spread of diseases like CWD. Express concerns about CWD to your political representatives. Support increased financial assistance for wildlife and agricultural agencies to combat CWD. Encourage officials at all levels of government to support the steps necessary to slow the spread of CWD across Pennsylvania. If you see a deer or elk displaying symptoms of CWD, report it to the appropriate Game Commission region office.

Attention Processors & Taxidermists

If you are presented with deer, elk, or moose body parts harvested in CWD-infected areas, please contact the nearest Game Commission region office for guidance. A Game Commission representative may collect tissue samples, discuss proper processing and disposal procedures, and provide information to hunters.

Permitted Parts

The following cervid parts may be safely transported into and within Pennsylvania. These parts may be moved out of Pennsylvania’s Disease Management Areas.

- Meat with no part of the spinal column or head attached
- Cleaned hides without the head
- Skull plates and/or antlers cleaned of all brain tissue
- Upper canine teeth without soft tissue
- Finished taxidermy mounts

Prohibited High-Risk Parts

- Spinal Column
- Spleen
- Lymph Nodes
- Brain
- Eyes
- Tonsils
- Lymph Nodes

Permitted Parts

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What is Chronic Wasting Disease?

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a member of the transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) family of diseases that includes Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE) or Mad Cow Disease in cattle; Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) in humans; and Scrapie in sheep and goats. It was first recognized in Colorado deer in 1967. The specific cause of CWD is believed to be an abnormal prion that is found in the brain, the nervous system, and some lymphoid tissues of infected animals. It causes death of brain cells, and on a microscopic level, holes in the brain tissue.

How is it spread?

CWD is transmitted both directly through animal-to-animal contact and indirectly through food and soil contaminated with bodily excretions including feces, urine and saliva. Contaminated carcasses or high-risk carcass parts may also spread the disease indirectly through environmental contamination, which lasts for years, if not decades.

How can I tell if an animal has CWD?

Animals infected with CWD may not show signs of infection for 12 or more months. Late-stage symptoms of CWD-infected animals include an extreme loss of body condition; excessive drinking, urination, salivation and drooling; and behavioral and neurologic changes such as repetitive walking patterns, droopy ears, a wide-based stance, and listlessness. Some animals lose their fear of humans and predators. There is no known cure. It is important to note that these symptoms are characteristic of many diseases other than CWD. Confirming an animal is infected with CWD requires laboratory testing of the brain or lymph nodes of the head.

Where has CWD been found?

In Pennsylvania, Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) has been detected in these Disease Management Areas (DMAs): DMA 1 on a captive deer farm in Adams County in 2012 (DMA 1 has since been eliminated); DMA 2 in multiple free-ranging deer in Bedford, Blair, Cambria, and Fulton counties since 2012, as well as captive deer farms in Bedford, Franklin, and Fulton counties; DMA 3 in two captive deer farms in Jefferson County and a free-ranging deer in Clearfield County; DMA 4 in a captive deer at a facility in Lancaster County. In addition, CWD has been detected in wild or captive deer and/or elk in many other states and provinces.

What precautions should hunters take?

Hunters should only harvest animals that appear healthy, and practice basic precautions like wearing gloves while field dressing an animal and washing hands and equipment thoroughly when finished. If you see an animal that is sick, do not attempt to disturb, kill, or remove the animal. Accurately document the location of the animal and immediately contact the nearest Game Commission region office.

Where can I have my animal tested?

Hunters can submit their harvested deer to the Pennsylvania Animal Diagnostic Laboratory System for testing; there is a fee. The Chronic Wasting Disease Submission Form for hunters and fee can be found on their website, http://www.padls.org.