

Updated Chronic Wasting Disease Surveillance in Ontario

The Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food and Rural Affairs (OMAFRA) is updating chronic wasting disease (CWD) surveillance starting July 1st, 2019. Due to concerns over CWD in a Quebec red deer farm close to the Ontario border and declining participation in the current program, OMAFRA is modifying the sampling practices at provincially licenced abattoirs. This will provide greater geographical coverage of farms with domestic cervids across the province and help to better manage the risk this disease poses to Ontario.

In Ontario, suspicion of CWD in domestic cervids requires immediate notification to the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) and is immediately notifiable by provincial animal health laboratories to OMAFRA under the Animal Health Act. The CFIA can be contacted through their emergency hotline at 1-877-814-2342. Farmers with health concerns about their domestic cervids should call their herd veterinarian. Attending veterinarians may contact an OMAFRA veterinarian through the Agricultural Information Contact Centre at 1-877-424-1300.

CWD is caused by infectious proteins (prions) and infected deer shed CWD prions in every fluid body secretion and antler velvet.

Early signs of CWD may be subtle and easy to miss. CWD is always fatal. Clinical disease rarely begins when a deer is less than 12 months of age, even if exposure has occurred. The disease develops over 12-18 months and the animals may appear normal during this time. While dramatic progressive weight loss gives the disease its name, other symptoms include loss of awareness; loss of social behaviour; listlessness; drooping ears; increased urination, drinking and salivation; and retained winter hair coats. Deer may appear weak, stumble or otherwise have an abnormal gait. Affected deer will die. There is no treatment.

Deer may contract CWD from other infected deer or indirectly from contaminated feed, water or other environmental sources. The disease is extremely persistent in the environment and resistant to disinfection and

cleaning procedures. All cervid species are susceptible, including whitetailed deer, elk, moose, caribou/reindeer, red deer and fallow deer.

What is changing?

A portion of all normal, healthy deer species over 12 months of age presented for slaughter in Ontario will be tested for CWD starting July 1st, 2019. The carcasses will be held at the abattoir until test results are received which prevents positive carcasses from entering the food chain. If a farmer is enrolled in the federal Voluntary Herd Certification Program and requires all their deer at slaughter be tested, OMAFRA will facilitate that sampling and testing.

***Public health authorities recommend that infected carcasses
not be consumed***

Prevention is the best medicine

Biosecurity is key to stopping the spread of CWD. Always inquire about any source of new deer or genetic material. Ensure your farm is protected against wild deer accessing the same feed, water and pasture as domestic deer. Work with a herd veterinarian to ensure any sick deer are examined quickly. Consider going on the Voluntary Herd Certification Program administered by the CFIA.

For additional information:

OMAFRA

Reporting regulation under the Animal Health Act

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/ahw/aha-regs-guidelines.htm>

Permit system for domestic cervids

<http://www.omafra.gov.on.ca/english/food/inspection/ahw/cwd.htm>

CFIA

Chronic wasting disease (CWD) of deer and elk

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/cwd/eng/1330143462380/1330143991594>

Voluntary Herd Certification Program

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/cwd/herd-certification/eng/1330187841589/1330187970925>

Biosecurity for Canadian Cervid Farms Producer Planning Guide

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/biosecurity/standards-and-principles/planning-guide/eng/1529933780338/1529933780826?chap=0>

Chronic wasting disease - What to expect if your animals may be infected

<http://www.inspection.gc.ca/animals/terrestrial-animals/diseases/reportable/cwd/if-your-animals-may-be-infected/eng/1330188848236/1330189018195>

Ministry of Natural Resources and Forestry

Chronic Wasting Disease

<https://www.ontario.ca/page/chronic-wasting-disease>

Agricultural Information Contact Centre

1-877-424-1300

[**ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca**](mailto:ag.info.omafra@ontario.ca)

[**www.ontario.ca/omafra**](http://www.ontario.ca/omafra)