



NEWS RELEASE

Texas Animal Health Commission

“Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893”

Dee Ellis, DVM, MPA • Executive Director

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

October 27, 2011

Attention: Elk Producers

CWD Herd Monitoring Program to be Enforced Jan. 2012

AUSTIN – Elk producers wishing to sell or move elk must enroll in the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) herd monitoring program or have elk tested as described below. During 2011, TAHC rules for elk movement have been held in abeyance to encourage producers to enroll in the program.

After January 1, 2012, however, elk will only be allowed to move after all surveillance requirements have been met. Surveillance requirements can be met one of two ways:

1. By enrolling in the CWD status program, testing all mortalities and achieving “status,” or
2. By having a valid “not detected” CWD test on file prior to movement. The number of valid CWD tests required are based on the number of elk being moved and whether they are captive or free ranging.

The TAHC implemented new elk herd requirements on January 1, 2010, to ensure a stronger surveillance system for CWD in elk. “The program is intended to help protect the exotic and native wildlife and the cervid industry of Texas from the possible introduction of CWD, by developing an effective surveillance system”, Dr. Dee Ellis, TAHC State Veterinarian, said. “Enrollment and ultimately achieving status will allow producers to move elk without requiring additional mortality testing,” Dr. Ellis added. “I strongly encourage all elk producers to sign up today.”

CWD is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy known to affect elk, moose, white-tailed deer, black-tailed deer and mule deer. It is a fatal, degenerative brain wasting disease. The typical clinical signs of CWD are emaciation, behavioral changes and excessive salivation. CWD is not known to affect people, and has not been detected in Texas to date. Since it was first detected in Colorado in 1967 however, it has subsequently been diagnosed in 17 other states and continues to threaten the cervid industry in other parts of the US.

The TAHC enforces *interstate* movement requirements for elk and other cervids entering Texas. Out of state animals must originate from a herd which has participated for at least five years in a state-approved CWD herd certification program, and with no clinical signs of CWD in the herd. In today’s environment, the mobility and transportation of agricultural animals throughout the state and country has greatly increased the potential exposure to diseases.

“Adequate and timely surveillance testing is critical to detect a newly introduced or emerging disease as quickly as possible, so that it can be eliminated before potential spread to other animals”, explained Dr. Terry Hensley, Assistant State Veterinarian.

CWD has not been detected in captive or free-ranging deer or elk in Texas, but elk producers must continue to be mindful of the disease, and take necessary precautions to ensure the safety of exotic livestock.

“Maintaining surveillance for CWD in Texas is critical for effective animal disease response,” Dr. Hensley added.

By keeping appropriate records and sufficient sampling of animals as required by the program, a herd can achieve a recognized “herd status” for CWD. Under the TAHC’s elk enrollment program, elk would be test- eligible at 16 months of age or older, and tests conducted in a herd would be valid for one year.

In order to be eligible for moving elk, participation in the program is mandatory. Elk owners can enroll their herds in the CWD monitoring program today by contacting their local TAHC regional office.

Region 1 (Amarillo, TX)

Phone: 806-354-9335

Region Director: Dr. Brad Williams

Supervising Inspector: Bob Young

Region 5 (Beeville, TX)

Phone: 361-358-3234

Regional Director: Dr. David Finch

Supervising Inspector: Howard Helmers

Region 2 (Hempstead, TX)

Phone: 979-921-9481

Regional Director: Dr. Mark Michalke

Supervising Inspector: Dwayne Easley

Region 6 (Lampasas, TX)

Phone: 512-556-6277

Region Director: Dr. Pete Fincher

Supervising Inspector: David Martin

Region 3 (Fort Worth, TX)

Phone: 817-244-2597

Region Director: Dr. Max Dow

Supervising Inspector: Bobby Crozier

Region 7 (Rockdale, TX)

Phone: 512-446-2507

Regional Director: Dr. Tommy Barton

Supervising Inspector: Russell Iselt

Region 4 (Mt. Pleasant, TX)

Phone: 903-572-1966

Regional Director: Dr. Greg Hawkins

Supervising Inspector: Chip Nicholson

For more information about CWD, visit www.tahc.state.tx.us.

Founded in 1893, the Texas Animal Health Commission works to protect the health of all Texas livestock, including: cattle, swine, poultry, sheep, goats, equine animals, and exotic livestock.

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