



# NEWS RELEASE

Texas Animal Health Commission  
“Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893”  
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

September 27, 2012

## TAHC Proposes Modifications to Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Rules

AUSTIN – The Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) will soon be accepting public comments on rules proposed at its September 18 meeting to amend **Chapter 40, entitled “Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)”**. Publication of the proposed rules is expected to be in mid-October with a 45 day comment period to follow.

The proposed rules revise numerous current requirements in an effort to address recent developments involving CWD. This includes the diagnosis of CWD in two mule deer near the New Mexico border and the addition of red deer and Sika deer to the list of species susceptible to CWD. The amendments would also bring Texas rules into alignment with the recently released Federal CWD interim final rule, which sets the minimum standards for interstate movement of cervid species.

The proposed TAHC rules apply to the non-indigenous cervid species of Texas under its jurisdiction. The Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) is also in the process of evaluating its rules for the cervid species it regulates (indigenous to Texas), including white-tailed deer and mule deer.

Below are key points of the proposed rules to Chapter 40:

- Require additional cervid species such as North American Elk or Wapiti, red deer and Sika deer to participate in surveillance for CWD if they are being moved or transported within the state.
- Provide enrollment requirements for the TAHC Complete Monitored Herd Program for CWD, based in large part on the USDA interim final rule on CWD.
  - Complete physical inventory of the herd every three years
  - Fences must be 8 feet in height for herds enrolling after the rule is effective
  - Require 30 feet of separation between herds, with no shared working facilities
  - Requires reporting of all CWD suspicious animals and testing of all death losses in animals 12 months of age or older (changed from 16 months).
- Delegates authority to the Executive Director to issue an order to declare a CWD high risk area or county based on sound epidemiological principles for disease detection, control and eradication.

“The rule proposals are written to meet the federal standards but they can be adapted to recognize comments received,” Dr. Andy Schwartz, Assistant Executive Director, said. “The TAHC is committed to hosting as many meetings as necessary with the cervid industry and stakeholder groups to ensure that a successful Texas specific program is created that matches the USDA interim final rule. The TAHC’s ultimate goal is to enhance marketability.”

CWD has never been shown to affect people or domestic livestock. The progressively fatal disease causes chronic weight loss and abnormal behavior such as disorientation. Prions (the infectious agent of CWD), are present in the body fluids of infected animals, and can be shed onto the soil where they may remain infectious to other susceptible animals for many years. For this reason the proposed TAHC rules apply to land, as well as cervids where CWD has been found or is likely to be found.

At its September 18 meeting, the Commission also passed a rule proposed at their previous meeting, establishing movement restriction zones in the Trans-Pecos Region of far West Texas. This will allow a coordinated effort between the TAHC and TPWD to control and contain CWD in the Hueco Mountains where it was recently discovered. The two agencies are currently working on plans for enhanced hunter kill surveillance and movement control enforcement for the coming hunting season.

“The TAHC will continue to work closely with Texas Parks and Wildlife and the CWD Task Force to ensure alignment of our rules and cooperation to protect the health of the entire cervid population of Texas,” said Dr. Dee Ellis, State Veterinarian and TAHC Executive Director.

A detailed explanation of the rule proposals will be available soon on the TAHC web site at <http://www.tahc.state.tx.us/regs/proposals.html> .

The TAHC rule proposals have a comment period of 45 days once they have been published. The TAHC encourages and appreciates all comments.

Comments on the TAHC’s proposed regulations must be submitted in writing to Carol Pivonka, Texas Animal Health Commission, 2105 Kramer Lane, Austin, Texas 78758, by fax at (512) 719-0721 or by e-mail to [comments@tahc.state.tx.us](mailto:comments@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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