



CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

FACT SHEET

WHAT IS CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE?

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a progressive, fatal, and degenerative neurological disease affecting cervids such as deer, elk, moose and other members of the cervid family. The disease was first discovered in captive mule deer in Colorado in 1967, and has since been confirmed in approximately 25 states.

CWD belongs to the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs). TSEs include a number of different diseases affecting animals or humans including bovine spongiform encephalopathy (BSE) in cattle, scrapie in sheep and goats, and Creutzfeldt-Jacob disease (CJD) in humans. Although CWD shares certain features with other TSEs, it is a distinct disease affecting only cervids.

Both the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and the World Health Organization have confirmed that there is no evidence that CWD poses a serious risk to humans. However, as a precaution, it is advised that meat from animals evidencing infection of CWD should not be consumed.

SIGNS & SYMPTOMS

CWD is a slow and progressive disease. Due to a long incubation, cervids infected with CWD may not produce any visible signs for a number of years after becoming infected. As the disease progresses, animals with CWD show changes in behavior and appearance.

Clinical signs may include:

- progressive weight loss,
- stumbling or tremors with a lack of coordination,
- excessive thirst, salivation or urination,
- loss of appetite,
- teeth grinding,
- abnormal head posture,
- and/or drooping ears.

TRANSMISSION

Cervids can be exposed to CWD by direct animal to animal contact, or indirectly by contact with infected items in the environment, such as soil, dust, or forage.

Infected animals shed prions through their saliva, urine or feces, blood, or soft antler material. Soil and the

surrounding environment can also be contaminated through decomposition of infected carcasses. Prions are capable of infecting other animals for years, and as more cervids become infected, the number of infectious CWD prions in the environment can increase.



DIAGNOSIS

There are two official CWD postmortem tests; Enzyme-linked immunosorbent assay (ELISA) and Immunohistochemistry (IHC). Samples may be collected by a state or federal animal health official, a CWD Certified Veterinarian, or a Certified CWD Postmortem Sample Collector.

For herds that have tested positive or have been traced to a positive herd, there are two antemortem testing options available upon approval from the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC).

Upon laboratory confirmation, the TAHC and/or Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) will work closely with the affected landowner to prevent disease spread by quarantining the premises to restrict animal movement. At this time, there is no known treatment or vaccine for CWD.

REPORTING CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE

Individuals who see a captive cervid showing clinical signs, should document the location of the animal and immediately call the TAHC at 800-550-8242. Those who observe a free-ranging cervid exhibiting clinical signs of CWD should document the location and immediately call their local TPWD or Law Enforcement Division office. Do not attempt to touch, disturb, kill, or remove the animal.

When CWD susceptible species are tested on a premises, the owner must report the test results to



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the TAHC within 30 days of receiving the test results by either emailing CWD_reports@tahc.texas.gov or writing to TAHC, CWD Susceptible Species Reporting, P.O. Box 12966, Austin, Texas 78711-2966.

CWD MANAGEMENT PROGRAM

In order to protect Texas cervids from CWD, the TAHC and TPWD have regulations in place to prevent the introduction and spread of the disease.

TAHC's regulations apply to all free-ranging and captive exotic CWD susceptible species. Requirements include surveillance, movement reporting, identification, and record keeping for harvested, captured, or bred exotic susceptible species on a premises. To learn more about TAHC requirements visit www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/elk-deer.

All mule deer, white-tailed deer, and other native species are under the jurisdiction of TPWD and their regulations.

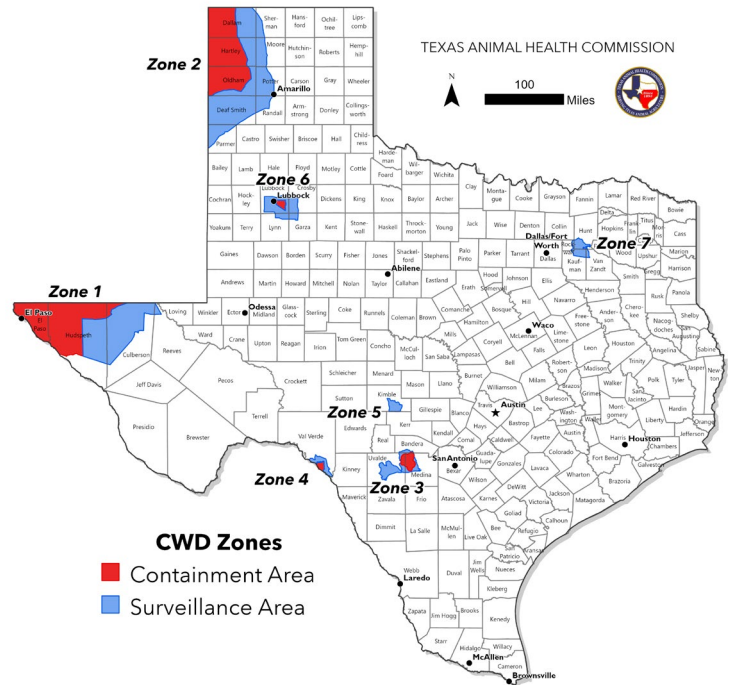
PREVENTION

Producers should follow proper herd management strategies to assist in keeping herds free of CWD in order to reduce the severity of implications caused by the disease. Management strategies may include but are not limited to surveillance, testing all mortality, quick disease identification, maintaining a closed herd, and recording accurate animal identification.

CWD Surveillance and Containment Zones

The TAHC and TPWD have established CWD movement restriction zones in portions of Texas with confirmed CWD cases in an effort to manage and prevent the spread of disease. For more information visit <https://tpwd.texas.gov/regulations/outdoor-annual/hunting/cwd/cwd-zones>.

To learn more about the zones and associated surveillance requirements, visit [https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=4&pt=2&ch=40&rl=Y](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=4&pt=2&ch=40&rl=Y).



Voluntary CWD Herd Status Program

The TAHC provides a voluntary herd status program for cervid breeders. For more information visit https://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/elk-deer/#cwdprograms.

ADDITIONAL CWD RESOURCES:

- Texas Parks and Wildlife: <https://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/diseases/cwd/>
- Chronic Wasting Disease Alliance: <http://cwd-info.org/>
- Department of Health & Human Services Center for Disease Control: <http://www.cdc.gov/prions/cwd/index.html>
- United States Department of Agriculture: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/cervid/cervids-cwd/cervid-cwd>