

CWD Update 119

March 09, 2018

International Updates

Finland

The following press release was issued by the Finnish Food Safety Authority (Evira) on March 8, 2018 (https://www.evira.fi/en/animals/current_issues/2018/moose-found-dead-in-forest-with-chronic-wasting-disease/):

Moose Found Dead in Forest with Chronic Wasting Disease

The chronic wasting disease (CWD) has been found in a moose or European elk (*Alces alces*) for the first time ever in Finland. The disease was diagnosed in Kuhmo in a 15-year old moose that had died naturally. The results of the analyses carried out by Finnish Food Safety Authority Evira have been verified by a EU reference laboratory. Species of the deer family, known as “cervids”, can suffer from the chronic wasting disease, and it is always fatal. The disease is not known to have been contracted by people.

Norway was before this case the only European country where CWD has been diagnosed. The monitoring of the occurrence of the disease was intensified from the beginning of 2018 in Finland and five other EU Member States.

In Finland, the occurrence of the disease has been studied already since 2003. None of the ca. 2 500 samples analysed so far had tested positive for the disease. The monitoring of the disease will now be further intensified in the Kuhmo and Kainuu region. Hunters are going to be provided with more instructions before the start of the next hunting season, if appropriate.

The chronic wasting disease is not known to have been contracted by people. Moose meat is safe to eat and no restrictions are imposed on the sales and exportation of meat of animals of the deer family. As a precautionary measure the export of live animals of the deer family to other countries will be discontinued for now.

CWD is a slowly progressing disease of deer, elk, reindeer, and moose which always leads to death. The chronic wasting disease is a prion disease and related to the BSE (bovine spongiform encephalopathy) and other TSE diseases (transmissible spongiform encephalopathy). The disease is common in North America. The moose found in Kuhmo did not suffer from the North American, transmissible form of the chronic wasting disease, but from the form diagnosed in Norway, which is found incidentally in individual animals of the deer family.

State and Provincial Updates

Wisconsin

The following press release was issued by the Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection on March 8, 2018

(https://datcp.wi.gov/Pages/News_Media/20180308CWDPositiveWashingtonCounty.aspx):

CWD-Positive Deer Found on Washington County Farm

Madison – A white-tailed deer from a breeding farm in Washington County has tested positive for chronic wasting disease (CWD), Wisconsin State Veterinarian Dr. Paul McGraw announced today. The National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa, confirmed the test results.

The buck was born on the 15-acre farm in May 2015. It was part of a herd of 58 whitetails, along with 13 elk, according to the owner's most recent registration. The owner found it dead from injuries apparently sustained in a fight. The deer had previously appeared healthy. It was sampled in accordance with Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection (DATCP) rules, which require testing of farm-raised deer and elk when they die or are killed.

The farm has been enrolled in the CWD Herd Status Program since 2003. All deer from herds enrolled in the CWD Herd Status Program must be tested for CWD if they die or are killed on the farm.

The farm has been quarantined, an automatic action upon a positive CWD test, which stops movement of deer off the premises. DATCP's Animal Health Division will investigate the animal's history and trace movements of deer onto and off the farm to determine whether other herds may have been exposed to the CWD-positive deer.

Montana

The following press release was issued by Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks on March 6, 2018 (http://fwp.mt.gov/news/newsReleases/fishAndWildlife/nr_1060.html):

CWD Prevalence Mostly Below Threshold for More Management

Billings — The number of deer in southern Carbon County with chronic wasting disease generally is low enough to warrant no substantial immediate changes in management.

Of the 400 deer harvested by hunters in the area during the general 2017 hunting season and a special hunt that ended in February, 2 percent tested positive for the disease. Biologists generally consider management action to control the disease if at least 5 percent of the herd is infected.

CWD is a progressive, fatal neurological disease that effects deer, elk and moose. It has been present for some years in states and Canadian provinces north, east and south of Montana, but

was first found in wild deer in the state this fall during focused surveillance throughout south central Montana.

The discovery prompted a special hunt in an area of southern Carbon County to determine the geographic extent, or distribution, of the disease and the prevalence, or percent of the herd that is infected.

During the special hunt, which ended Feb. 15, samples were taken from all 215 mule deer and 112 white-tailed deer harvested by hunters and sent to Colorado State University for testing. Deer harvested by hunters in the area and tested during the general 2017 deer season also were considered when calculating the statistical presence of the disease.

Samples from eight mule deer and two white-tailed deer harvested in southern Carbon County tested positive for CWD.

Emily Almberg, wildlife research specialist at FWP's laboratory in Bozeman, said that works out to 2 percent overall prevalence in the deer herds tested. Broken down by species, the prevalence in mule deer was 2 percent while the prevalence in white-tailed deer was 1 percent.

Biologists are concerned, however, that the majority of the positive tests came out of Hunting District 510 between Belfry, Warren and Bridger. Within that area, prevalence was closer to 10 percent, Almberg said. Because that prevalence exceeds the 5 percent threshold, she said, biologists will have to determine whether management specifically for the disease is warranted in the future.

CWD has not been shown to spread to people, pets, livestock or wildlife outside of the deer family. However, the World Health Organization and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend not consuming meat from an animal known to be infected with CWD. The CDC also recommends that hunters have deer tested if they were harvested in areas where CWD is known to be present.

More information about CWD is available online to <http://fwp.mt.gov/cwd>.

Minnesota

The following press release was issued by the Minnesota Board of Animal Health on March 2, 2018 (https://www.bah.state.mn.us/news_release/samples-positive-for-cwd-from-depopulated-deer-farm/):

Samples Positive for CWD from Depopulated Deer Farm

Saint Paul - The Minnesota Board of Animal Health received positive test results for chronic wasting disease (CWD) this week after depopulating a Winona County deer farm first identified with the disease in November 2017. All seven of the remaining white-tailed deer in the herd were harvested, sampled, and found to have the disease affecting deer and elk.

The producer had also moved deer into the Winona City Park, and those three animals were considered exposed to CWD and tested. Results showed no CWD was detected in samples collected from those animals. The next step in the Board's CWD response is to work with the herd owner to clean and decontaminate the enclosure that contained the positive deer.

"The response to the initial CWD detection and plan to depopulate and test the herd went very well," said Dr. Linda Glaser, Board of Animal Health assistant director and cervid program manager. "We had the herd owner's full cooperation, and the support of the USDA and DNR as we investigated the extent of the disease in this herd."

Only one farmed deer herd found infected with CWD in Minnesota has not been depopulated. That herd is currently quarantined and monitored by the Board. An update on that herd was issued in November 2017 [[click this link to read the update](#)].

CWD is a disease of the deer and elk family caused by an abnormally shaped protein, a prion, which can damage brain and nerve tissue. The disease is most likely transmitted when infected deer and elk shed prions in saliva, feces, urine, and other fluids or tissues. CWD is not known to naturally occur in other animals. The disease is fatal in deer and elk, and there are no known treatments or vaccines. Consuming infected meat is not advised.

Maryland

The following press release was issued by the Maryland Department of Natural Resources on February 21, 2018 (<http://news.maryland.gov/dnr/2018/02/21/ten-deer-test-positive-for-chronic-wasting-disease/>):

Ten Deer Test Positive for Chronic Wasting Disease *- Samples Found Within Existing Management Area*

The [Maryland Department of Natural Resources](#) has received laboratory confirmation that 10 white-tailed deer sampled in Allegany and Washington counties tested positive for [chronic wasting disease](#), a neurological disease found in deer and elk.

All of the positive samples came from within the existing Chronic Wasting Disease Management Area.

Six of the positive samples collected in 2017 were harvested by hunters during the statewide deer season and three came from road-killed deer collected during routine sampling. One positive sample came from a sick deer that had been reported by a concerned citizen and collected by staff.

"While chronic wasting disease continues to spread, both regionally and nationally, it still only affects a small percentage of deer in western Maryland," [Wildlife and Heritage Service](#) Director Paul Peditto said. "In the interest of managing the deer resource for all Marylanders, department staff will continue to work diligently to document and monitor the presence of the disease."

The department has sampled for chronic wasting disease since 2002, and more than 9,600 deer have been tested to date. A total of 749 Maryland deer were tested during the 2017-2018 season, mostly from Allegany, Garrett and Washington counties.

Chronic wasting disease was first confirmed in Maryland in February 2011. The Maryland cases appear to be from an outbreak that was found in nearby West Virginia in 2005. Since then, Maryland, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia have all documented chronic wasting disease in the region. The latest findings bring the number of positive cases in Maryland to 27.

Concerns about chronic wasting disease should not stop anyone from hunting deer or enjoying venison. Research suggests the disease cannot be naturally transmitted to humans. However, as a general safety precaution it is recommended that hunters avoid consuming the meat of sick animals as well as the brain, lymph nodes or spinal column of any deer — all of which are normally removed during the butchering process.

Virginia

The following press release was issued by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) on February 8, 2018:

16 New CWD Positive White-tailed Deer in Northwest Virginia

Richmond - Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was confirmed by the Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries (DGIF) in 14 deer in Frederick County and two deer in Shenandoah County during the 2017 deer hunting season. Fifteen of the deer were harvested by hunters and one deer was killed by a vehicle. Approximately 1,500 deer from Frederick, Clarke, Warren, and Shenandoah counties were tested for CWD during the 2017 hunting season. Since 2009, 38 CWD-positive deer have been confirmed in Frederick (35) and Shenandoah (3) Counties.

The Virginia CWD Containment Area borders are expected to remain the same – the four counties named above - for the fall 2018 hunting season. DGIF plans to collect CWD samples from the Containment Area on the first two Saturdays of the 2018 firearms deer season.

DGIF appreciates the assistance of deer hunters for the excellent cooperation during CWD sample collection this past fall. DGIF would also like to thank the cooperating road-kill contractor and deer processors for their assistance. We look forward to continuing these partnerships in 2018.

CWD has been detected in 24 states and three Canadian provinces. The disease is a slow, progressive neurologic (brain and nervous system) disease found in deer, elk, and moose in North America which ultimately results in death of the animal. It is spread through urine, feces, and saliva. Symptoms do not appear for several years and include staggering, abnormal posture, lowered head, drooling, confusion, and marked weight loss.

There is no evidence that CWD can be naturally transmitted to humans, livestock, or pets, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention advise hunters to test all deer harvested from known

CWD-positive areas and to not consume any animals that test positive for the disease. Regulations pertaining to CWD, maps of affected states, and more information about the disease and what DGIF is doing about it can be found on the DGIF website at:

www.dgif.virginia.gov/wildlife/disease/cwd

Iowa

The following press release was issued by the Iowa Department of Natural Resources on February 8, 2018 (<http://www.iowadnr.gov/About-DNR/DNR-News-Releases/ArticleID/1746/Fatal-deer-disease-confirmed-in-Wayne-County-%E2%80%93-first-case-in-wild-deer-outside-northeast-Iowa>):

Fatal Deer Disease confirmed in Wayne County – First Case in Wild Deer Outside Northeast Iowa

A hunter-harvested adult doe taken in southeast Wayne County during the first shotgun deer season has tested positive for the presence of chronic wasting disease (CWD). This is the first hunter-harvested wild deer outside of northeast Iowa to test positive for the always fatal disease.

The deer was shot on Dec. 5.

“We contacted the hunter once it was confirmed,” said Terry Haindfield, wildlife biologist, and coordinator for the Iowa Department of Natural Resources chronic wasting disease monitoring effort. “The test results are disappointing but not surprising. We are seeing an increasing number of CWD positive deer in northeast Iowa and from our neighboring states.”

Haindfield said there have been seven additional CWD positive tests so far from deer in northeast Iowa that came from the 2017 seasons – six in Allamakee County and one in Clayton County. The Iowa DNR is awaiting the final set of test results from the special collection in Allamakee and Clayton counties in January.

“We will set up a meeting in Wayne County to discuss what this means for local hunters and landowners and listen to their concerns and together we will form a plan to try to prevent or contain this from getting a solid foothold,” he said.

Chronic wasting disease is a neurologic disease of deer and elk, belonging to the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) or prion diseases. Though it shares certain features with other TSEs like bovine spongiform encephalopathy (“Mad Cow Disease”) or scrapie in sheep, it is a distinct disease apparently affecting only deer, moose, and elk. It is always fatal.

The disease first appeared in the wild deer herd in 2013 and each year since, the Iowa DNR has placed extra emphasis on tracking the movement and attempting to stop or slow the disease with the cooperation of successful hunters.

Recent Publications

Scientific Opinion on Chronic Wasting Disease (II)

EFSA Panel on Biological Hazards (BIOHAZ), Antonia Ricci, Ana Allende, Declan Bolton, Marianne Chemaly, Robert Davies, Pablo Salvador Fernandez Escamez, Rosina Girones, Lieve Herman, Kostas Koutsoumanis, Roland Lindqvist, Birgit Nørrung, Lucy Robertson, Giuseppe Ru, Moez Sanaa, Panagiotis Skandamis, Emma Snary, Niko Speybroeck, Benno Ter Kuile, John Threlfall, Helene Wahlström, Sylvie Benestad, Dolores Gavier-Widen, Michael W Miller, Glenn C Telling, Morten Tryland, Francesca Latronico, Angel Ortiz-Pelaez, Pietro Stella and Marion Simmons. [doi: 10.2903/j.efsa.2018.5132](https://doi.org/10.2903/j.efsa.2018.5132).

Abstract:

The European Commission asked EFSA for a scientific opinion on chronic wasting disease in two parts. Part one, on surveillance, animal health risk-based measures and public health risks, was published in January 2017. This opinion (part two) addresses the remaining Terms of Reference, namely, ‘are the conclusions and recommendations in the EFSA opinion of June 2004 on diagnostic methods for chronic wasting disease still valid? If not, an update should be provided’, and ‘update the conclusions of the 2010 EFSA opinion on the results of the European Union survey on chronic wasting disease in cervids, as regards its occurrence in the cervid population in the European Union’. Data on the performance of authorised rapid tests in North America are not comprehensive, and are more limited than those available for the tests approved for statutory transmissible spongiform encephalopathies surveillance applications in cattle and sheep. There are no data directly comparing available rapid test performances in cervids. The experience in Norway shows that the Bio-Rad TeSeE™ SAP test, immunohistochemistry and western blotting have detected reindeer, moose and red deer cases. It was shown that testing both brainstem and lymphoid tissue from each animal increases the surveillance sensitivity. Shortcomings in the previous EU survey limited the reliability of inferences that could be made about the potential disease occurrence in Europe. Subsequently, testing activity in Europe was low, until the detection of the disease in Norway, triggering substantial testing efforts in that country. Available data neither support nor refute the conclusion that chronic wasting disease does not occur widely in the EU and do not preclude the possibility that the disease was present in Europe before the survey was conducted. It appears plausible that chronic wasting disease could have become established in Norway more than a decade ago.

<http://onlinelibrary.wiley.com/doi/10.2903/j.efsa.2018.5132/full>