

March 3, 2006

Winter tests find one more case of CWD in wild deer in Alberta

Edmonton... Disease control efforts this winter have identified another case of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in wild deer in Alberta, bringing the total number of cases to nine since the first case was found in September 2005. The federal Canadian Food Inspection Agency confirmed the province's latest findings on February 24.

"With almost 400,000 wild deer in Alberta, we must continue to take an aggressive approach to control the spread of chronic wasting disease," said David Coutts, Minister of Sustainable Resource Development. "The disease control actions we are taking now will help ensure Alberta's wild deer population remains healthy for the long term."

The latest case was discovered as a result of disease control actions that removed 1,368 wild deer in the vicinity of Empress and Acadia Valley where four wild deer were found with CWD in late 2005. Testing by the province is ongoing, with approximately 300 to 400 tests remaining. Alberta's first case of CWD in wild deer was found about 30 kilometres southeast of Oyen, near the Saskatchewan border.

Additional herd reduction activities will begin on March 6 south of Empress and in the Red Deer River Valley south of Acadia Valley, which is in the immediate vicinity of the positive cases found this winter.

The disease control actions being taken are based on recommendations of an International Expert Scientific Panel on CWD and guided by Canada's National CWD Control Strategy. The recommendations call for local deer culls to eliminate new areas of infection and population reduction in high-risk areas to control and prevent the spread of the disease.

Chronic wasting disease is a nervous system disease; infected animals cannot maintain weight and slowly waste away. There is no scientific evidence to suggest that CWD can affect humans. As a precaution, however, the World Health Organization advises against allowing products from animals known to be infected with any prion disease into the human food system. There have been over 100 reported cases of CWD in wild deer in Saskatchewan.

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Attachment: Map of locations where deer with CWD have been found

For further information visit website at

<http://www3.gov.ab.ca/srd/fw/diseases/CWD/index.html>

Media enquiries may be directed to:

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Backgrounder

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Locations where deer with CWD have been found



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