

*July 28, 2011*

## **Disease detected in wood bison outside Wood Buffalo National Park**

### ***Hunters informed of the risks associated with brucellosis***

*Edmonton...* For years it has been suspected that brucellosis and bovine tuberculosis, introduced diseases that are common in wood bison in Wood Buffalo National Park, also occur in bison immediately west of the park. Evidence of brucellosis exposure has now been detected in two bison about 20 km west of Wood Buffalo National Park. Hunters, ranchers, Métis Settlements and First Nations in the area will continue to be informed on risks of disease and future bison management.

Under provincial legislation, wood bison east of Highway 35 and west of Wood Buffalo National Park can be hunted without a licence, except in Caribou Mountains Wildland Provincial Park. Some hunters participate in disease surveillance by providing samples for testing. An outfitter, provided with information and sample kits by Sustainable Resource Development, harvested two adult female bison in February and March that tested positive for exposure to brucellosis. The Canadian Food Inspection Agency verified the results on July 22.

The risk of disease transmission to humans remains very low and those who continue to harvest bison west of Wood Buffalo National Park are encouraged to contact the local Fish and Wildlife office for information on the risks associated with brucellosis and tuberculosis. As a precaution:

- any bison harvested should be handled carefully with gloves and examined for signs of disease, obvious lesions or other unusual features; and
- if the meat is to be eaten, it must be cooked thoroughly—smoking the meat is not sufficient to kill the bacteria that cause these diseases.

The Alberta government has a disease-management program to protect the province's agriculture industry and disease-free wood bison in northwestern Alberta. All free-ranging wood bison detected on private agricultural lands near Fort Vermilion, La Crete and within 10 kilometres of Highway 35 will be removed. Bison populations west of Wood Buffalo National Park will continue to be surveyed to confirm numbers, location and whether they carry any disease. This effort will continue until a long-term solution is applied to the bison in and around Wood Buffalo National Park.

For more information on brucellosis, bovine tuberculosis and the disease-management program for wood bison, please visit <http://srd.alberta.ca/FishWildlife/WildlifeDiseases/>.

## Media inquiries may be directed to:

Dave Ealey

Communications

Sustainable Resource Development

780-427-8636

Mark Evans

Communications

Alberta Health Services

780-538-6181.

Ag Media Line

Agriculture and Rural

Development

780-422-1005

To call toll free within Alberta dial 310-0000.

[Alberta Government](#) | [Newsroom](#) | [Ministries Listing](#) | [Health and Wellness Home Page](#) | [Sustainable Resource Development Home Page](#) | [Agriculture and Rural Development Home Page](#) | [News Releases](#) | [Top of Page](#) |

---

[Send us your comments or questions](#)

Copyright(©) 2011 Government of Alberta

