

Missouri Department of Agriculture

## **Agriculture News**

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### **Chronic Wasting Disease Found in Captive Deer**

(JEFFERSON CITY, Mo.) – The Missouri Departments of Agriculture, Conservation and Health and Senior Services and the U.S. Department of Agriculture announced today that a captive white-tailed deer in Macon County, Missouri has tested positive for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). CWD is a neurological disease found in deer, elk and moose.

"We have a plan in place and our team is actively working to ensure that this situation is addressed quickly and effectively," said State Veterinarian Dr. Linda Hickam. "Fortunately there is no evidence that CWD poses a risk to humans, non cervid livestock, household pets or food safety."

The animal that tested positive for CWD was a captive white-tailed deer inspected as part of the State's CWD surveillance and testing program. Preliminary tests were conducted by the USDA National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa.

Upon receiving the confirmed CWD positive, Missouri's departments of Agriculture, Conservation and Health and Senior Services initiated their CWD Contingency Plan. The plan was developed in 2002 by the Cervid Health Committee, a task force comprised of veterinarians, animal health officers and conservation officers from USDA, MDA, MDC and DHSS working together to mitigate challenges associated with CWD.

In February 2010 a case of CWD was confirmed in Linn County on a captive hunting preserve operated by the same entity, Heartland Wildlife Ranches, LLC. The Linn County facility was depopulated and no further infection was identified at that facility. The current case was identified through increased surveillance required by the management plan implemented from the previous CWD incident.

CWD is transmitted by live animal to animal contact or soil to animal contact. The disease was first recognized in 1967 in captive mule deer in the Colorado Division of Wildlife captive wildlife research facility in Fort Collins, Colorado. CWD has been documented in deer and/or elk in Colorado, Illinois, Kansas, Maryland, Michigan, Minnesota, Montana, Nebraska, New Mexico, New York, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Utah, Virginia, West Virginia, Wisconsin, and the Canadian Provinces of Alberta and Saskatchewan. There has been no evidence that the disease can be transmitted to humans.

"Missouri's proactive steps to put a testing protocol in place and create a contingency plan years ago is proving beneficial. We are in a solid position to follow pre-established steps to ensure Missouri's valuable whitetail deer resource remains healthy and strong," said Jason Sumners Missouri's Deer Biologist, Missouri Department of Conservation.

For more information regarding CWD, please contact Missouri's State Veterinarian Dr. Linda Hickam at (573) 751-3377.