



MDA POC Facilities CWD Quarantine Q & A

September 5, 2008

The Michigan Department of Agriculture quarantined all Privately Owned Cervid (POC) facilities in Michigan because of the discovery of Chronic Wasting Disease. The quarantines will remain in place until trace investigations are completed and the risk of the spread of disease has been evaluated. The Michigan Departments of Agriculture and Natural Resources appreciate that the quarantines are restricting business. As we evaluate current trace information and evaluate specific activities related to cervids, we are making refinements and clarifications in the quarantines. As this information becomes available, it will be posted on the MDA and MDNR web sites. The following questions and answers should help clarify activities and actions by MDA.

1. What is CWD?

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a fatal neurological disease that affects deer, elk and moose. Most cases of the disease have been in western states, but in the past several years, it has spread to Midwestern and eastern states.

Current evidence suggests that the disease is transmitted through infectious, self-multiplying proteins (prions). Prions are normal cell proteins whose shape has been transformed, causing CWD. The disease is transmitted by exposure to saliva of infected animals. Susceptible animals can also acquire CWD by eating feces from an infected animal, or soil contaminated by them. Once contaminated, soil can remain a source of infection for many years, making CWD a particularly difficult disease to eradicate.

Cervids are generally infected for 20-30 months before they show obvious symptoms, but incubation may be somewhat shorter (16 months) or considerably longer (60 months +) in individual cases.

Symptoms include severe weight loss, excessive salivation, increased drinking/urination, and abnormal behavior (e.g., stumbling, trembling, and depression). Infected deer and elk may allow unusually close approach by humans

2. Why has MDA quarantined every facility in Michigan?

Michigan has an extensive and active Privately-Owned Cervid network. Until more complete information about animal movement is available and testing is done on key animals at key locations, there is a risk that CWD could be moved to other locations. The best approach to managing an emerging disease concern when the risks and consequences to the environment, the industry, and Michigan's economy are so high is to adopt strong initial preventative actions. As more is learned about the scope and impact of the situation, more specific options having less of an impact on the industry will be considered.

3. What are the rules of quarantine?

- a) All cervidae on all Michigan cervidae premises are quarantined whether individually identified or not, except reindeer only farms.
- b) Quarantines include the movement of ALL live and dead animals.
- c) MDA and the DNR are working on rules for sport shooting on POC Facilities.
- d) All cervid byproducts except semen are included in the quarantine, including but not limited to: feces, urine, and saliva
- e) Trace work needs to be completed before a timeline for Quarantine release can be proposed.
- f) Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) and Department of Natural Resources (DNR) are currently visiting and reviewing records of the trace facilities.
- g) Quarantines include all species of deer, elk, and moose, except reindeer in facilities where there are no other cervids commingling with the reindeer. Reindeer are included if they are in a facility that includes any of the above mentioned cervids.
- h) Violation of a quarantine is a felony and is punishable by penalties under Act 466, Public Acts of 1988, as amended, MCL 287.744
- i) No cervids - live or dead - are to be added to or removed from quarantined premises without the written permission of MDA, except

heads being moved to a private practice veterinarian for sample collection.

- j) No cervid parts including feces, urine and saliva are to be removed from quarantined premises without the written permission of MDA. The following items are exceptions to this rule: semen, de-boned meat, hardened antlers, skull caps, and capes (as long as the skull plates have been cleaned of any tissue) and heads being moved to a private practice veterinarian for sample collection – these items may be moved without written permission.*
- k) Records, receipts, animal identification, or inventories pertaining to the purchase or selling of any cervidae on privately-owned cervid premises must be maintained and provided when asked for by DNR and MDA personnel.
- l) Appropriate samples from any cervidae that die while a facility is under this quarantine must be provided to MDA for disease testing. Contact Melanie Brownlee at 517-241-4859 in order to submit samples for Chronic Wasting Disease testing.

4. Can producers cull their cervids and bury the carcasses?

If the facility is not directly associated with the CWD disease investigation and a cervid dies or is culled, owners are required to submit the head for sampling and may bury the carcass inside the fence of the facility as long as the Bodies of Dead Animals Act (BODA) requirements are followed.

5. Can producers collect their own CWD specimens with proper training?

No, specimens need to be collected by an accredited veterinarian, or heads need to be frozen until they are picked up by a designated state employee. The protocol for collecting samples may be obtained from MDA by calling 517-373-1077.

However, producers may move heads to a private practice veterinarian for sample collection.

6. Can shooting ranches that have more than one premises (herd #) move live/dead cervids to their other locations?

Live cervids are never allowed to move from a shooting ranch facility. In some cases, depending on disease risk, dead animals may be moved for processing from one facility to another under the same ownership. Producers wanting a movement exception should call MDA at 517-373-1077.

However, while transporting the dead animals proper documentation must be carried authorizing the animal transport along with the associated animal identification documents and tags.

7. Can producers collect, sell and ship semen?

Yes. No forms are required for movement of this product.

8. Can meat waiting for retail distribution be sold?

As long as the meat has been deboned, it may be sold when the CWD test results are negative. Meat that was processed at a USDA inspected facility before the CWD testing requirements were in place may be sold.

9. Can meat be taken by hunters from my ranch?

De-boned meat may go with the hunter. We recommend hunters delay consumption until the product is confirmed to be CWD negative by MDA. Clients taking de-boned meat from a shooting facility must have a notice from MDA indicating full knowledge of pending CWD test results.

If the facility is not directly associated with the CWD disease investigation, and a cervid is shot for sport, facilities must submit the head for sampling. Owners may bury the bones and viscera inside the fence of the facility as long as the Bodies of Dead Animals Act (BODA) requirements are followed.

10. Can producers let antlers go with hunters?

Hardened antlers, skull caps, and capes may be moved, as long as the skull plates have been cleaned of any tissue.

11. Can animals leave the farm to go directly to slaughter?

While under quarantine, cervids may be moved to slaughter in a trailer that has been sealed by state or federal official, using a USDA seal. The animals must also travel with appropriate documents. All animals need to be accounted for while loading at the farm and unloading at an USDA inspected slaughter facility, and ALL heads must be submitted for testing.

12. Can antler art be moved off the premises ?

Hardened antlers used in antler art, furnishings, and crafts may be moved.

13. Can dead animals leave a facility while under quarantine?

Dead cervids may be transported from a facility that is under quarantine only if the following are met:

- i. The facility is not directly associated with the CWD disease investigation/and or the facility has been cleared based on testing/epidemiology results. MDA personnel will notify facilities when they meet this criterion.

- ii. Meat that has been de-boned may be transported prior to receiving CWD test results, or
- iii. Whole carcasses may be transported from a facility after the CWD sample comes back negative:
 - a. If facilities use this method, an adequate marking and tracking system must be in place to verify which sample came from which carcass.
 - b. Persons transporting entire carcasses for processing must have a document confirming test negative results from the shooting facility of origin.
- iv. Whole carcasses may be moved to a USDA inspected processing facility if the carcasses are transported on a trailer/vehicle with a USDA seal placed by a state or federal official with the appropriate permit for movement form. This is a similar process to the movement of live animals to slaughter.

* Updated and clarified at 3:04 p.m., 9-5-08