 HEADS WANTED!!

FOR DISEASE MONITORING

**ALL DEER HUNTERS IN MU 8-23:**

**We Need Your Help With**

WILDLIFE (DEER) DISEASE SURVEILLANCE

# What are we concerned about?

**Bovine Tuberculosis and Chronic Wasting Disease**

1. **Bovine tuberculosis (TB)** is a highly contagious disease that can debilitate and kill deer, moose, elk, and cattle. The bacteria are primarily transmitted through close contact, coughing and sneezing, although fecal and urine contamination of shared feed and water sources can be involved. Infection is more likely to occur when there is close contact between individual animals, so high animal density can play a role. Testing for TB in wildlife is challenging but examining lymph nodes in the head and the lungs can give an indication of disease presence.
2. **Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)** affects species in the deer family (cervids). It is caused by abnormal proteins (prions). CWD is found in mule deer, white-tailed deer, elk and moose in many jurisdictions in North America, including Alberta and Saskatchewan. CWD is always fatal. The only practical way to test for CWD is to examine tissues from a dead animal’s head – the tonsils, lymph nodes, and base of the brain.

# Are TB or CWD in British Columbia?

**We don't think so but we need to look.**

**Most of BC is considered at low risk for both diseases.**

1. MU 8-23 is considered at the highest risk for TB but we have no indication yet that wildlife are infected. We have an obligation to examine animals in the area to prove that BC wildlife are healthy. **To date, no BC wildlife have been positive for TB.**
2. No animals have tested positive in BC for CWD since testing began in 2001, but ongoing testing is necessary. Hunters can reduce the risk to BC wildlife by supporting surveillanceTo date, **all samples collected from BC are negative for CWD.**

# What are the Signs of TB and CWD?

There are no specific signs of early infections of either disease. In some cases the only signs are microscopic so an apparently healthy animal may be affected. With TB, the bacteria can lie dormant in lymph nodes for years or cause lumps and abscesses in the lungs. Signs of CWD include changes in behaviour and weight loss. Infected animals also may not exhibit signs for several years. Signs in later stages of the disease include severe wasting (thin), drooling, excessive thirst, lethargy, poor coordination, and drooping head and ears.

# How are they Spread?

1. The type of TB that occurs in wildlife and cattle can infect humans but **this is very rare** if you follow these basic principles; thoroughly cook meat, routinely wash your hands and wear gloves when field dressing game.
2. CWD occurs **ONLY in species in the deer family**, with no evidence of transmission to livestock, domestic animals or humans. Deer can get CWD through animal-to-animal contact as well as contact with contaminated environments. That’s right – Prions can persist in the soil. It is transmitted between animals through contact with urine, saliva and/or feces. Contaminated material can persist in the environment for a long time.

# What Can I Do to Help?

**If you are hunting deer in MU 8-23 please save the head for disease testing.**

Remove the antlers and attached bone for your trophy but drop the head off at a designated freezer (see information below). There is no charge and you will be informed of the result if you leave your contact information on the data card provided.

For more detailed information on CWD, please see:

WWW.STOPCHRONICWASTINGDISEASE.CA\*\*\* HUNTERS \*\*\*

**PLEASE SUBMIT DEER HEADS FOR DISEASE MONITORING**

TB AND CWD

Surveillance Program

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| GOOD SAMPLE | The PERFECT Sample | BAD SAMPLE |
| Freshly dead  or frozen immediately after death | *P2140205* | Rotten, green, and/or stinks |
| Not shot in head | Shot in head  or head is severely damaged |
| Good information about the kill location | No information on where found or killed |
| Deer is one year or older | Deer is less than one year old |
| Tag filled out and attached to ear | No tag attached to ear |

\*\*\* If possible, please remove antlers (due to limited freezer space) \*\*\*

# INSTRUCTIONS FOR DROP-OFF:

**Drop-off Location: Frank’s General Store, 1193 Highway 6, Cherryville**

1. Please take the provided tag, and fill out all the information requested.
   * Your name, phone number, and hunter licence number (so we can contact you if more information is needed)
   * Species
   * Sex of animal
   * Approximate age of animal (yearling or adult is fine)
   * Date of kill
   * Location of kill (Management Unit, GPS coordinates or physical description of location. Please be as detailed as possible)
   * Is it a hunter or road killed deer?
   * Did the animal look normal? What did the lungs look like? Did you see any abnormalities in the body or in behaviour?
2. Tear off the eartag (small portion with hole), and attach it to the animal’s ear using the plastic fasteners provided.
3. Please put the labeled head in a plastic bag, and put it in the freezer.

Thank you for your support of this important program to ensure the health of our wildlife!