



NEWS RELEASE

United States Department of Agriculture • Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service • Legislative and Public Affairs
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USDA Establishes a Herd Certification Program for Chronic Wasting Disease in the United States

Rule Seeks to Support U.S. Farmed Cervid Industry, Respond to Concerns Raised by State Animal Health and Wildlife Agencies

WASHINGTON, June 8, 2012--The U.S. Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) today announced an interim final rule to establish a national chronic wasting disease (CWD) herd certification program (HCP) and minimum requirements for interstate movement of deer, elk and moose, or cervids, in the United States. Participation in the program will be voluntary. The interim final rule amends the Agency's 2006 final rule which was never put into effect. CWD is a fatal neurological disease of deer, elk and moose and is in the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies. There is no evidence that CWD can be transmitted to humans.

"It is important that we have a nationwide CWD herd certification program for farmed or captive cervids," said USDA Chief Veterinary Officer John Clifford. "The amendments we are making to our CWD rule will help to control the spread of this disease, support the growing U.S. cervid industry, and complement existing state CWD programs."

Since 1997, CWD has been reported in farmed or captive cervids in 11 states. With the interim final rule, APHIS is addressing the needs of the farmed cervid industry, while responding to concerns raised by State animal health and wildlife partners after APHIS published its final CWD rule in 2006. The rule establishes a national program that provides uniform herd certification standards and will support the domestic and international marketability of U.S. cervid herds. The changes made to the CWD rule also will not preempt state or local laws and regulations that are more restrictive than APHIS' regulations, with the exception that cervids that are eligible to move interstate may transit a state that bans or restricts the entry of such animals en route to another state.

The CWD HCP is a cooperative effort between APHIS, State animal health and wildlife agencies, and the cervid industry. The program will provide consistent national minimum standards to certify cervid herds to be low risk for CWD and to establish minimum standards for the interstate movement of cervids.

APHIS will approve State programs that, among other requirements, establish movement restrictions on CWD-positive, CWD-suspect, and CWD-exposed animals; conduct tracebacks on such animals to determine what other animals may be affected by the disease; require the testing of all farmed cervids that die or are euthanized; and maintain premises and animal identification for all herds participating in approved State programs.

APHIS is issuing the interim final rule and requesting public comment for 30 days specifically on the issue of preemption and the protection of state and local authorities. The interim final rule will become effective 60 days after publication in the *Federal Register*. After reviewing the public comments, the Agency will issue a final rule and, should there be a need, incorporate any changes made in response to comments received by the Agency.

Participating States will have 180 days from the time the rule is published before APHIS begins enforcing the interstate movement provisions in the regulation. This will give states time to develop HCPs and have them approved by APHIS.

This interim final rule is available at http://www.aphis.usda.gov/newsroom/2012/06/pdf/cwd_rule.pdf. Consideration will be given to comments received on or before July 13. Interested parties may submit comments by either of the following methods:

- Federal eRulemaking Portal: Go to <http://www.regulations.gov/#!documentDetail;D=APHIS-2006-0118-0199>.
- Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery: please send your comment to Docket No. 00-108-8, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, Station 3A-03.8, 4700 River Road, Unit 118, Riverdale, MD 20737-1238.

Comments are posted on the Regulations.gov website and may also be reviewed at USDA, Room 1141, South Building, 14th Street and Independence Ave., S.W., Washington, D.C., between 8 a.m. and 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, excluding holidays. To facilitate entry into the comment reading room, please call (202) 799-7039.

Currently, U.S. agriculture is experiencing one of its best periods in history thanks to the productivity, resiliency, and resourcefulness of our farmers and ranchers. The work of APHIS helps safeguard our nation's agriculture, fishing and forestry industries from unwanted pests, disease and unjustified trade restrictions. For example, to promote the health of U.S. agricultural exports, APHIS develops and advances science-based standards with trading partners to ensure our farm exports, valued at more than \$137 billion annually, are protected from unjustified barriers. Strong agricultural exports are a positive contribution to the U.S. trade balance, support more than 1 million American jobs and boost economic growth.

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