



Chronic Wasting Disease Management Program

Fall 2004

What's new for 2004?

Saskatchewan is stepping up its fight against Chronic Wasting Disease by doing three things.

The first is moving from testing the heads of whitetail and mule deer taken by hunters from all over the province to an intensive testing program in the areas where the disease has been found.

The second is taking even more animals out of the areas where the disease has been found. Current science says the best way to stop the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease is through an intensive herd reduction program in the affected areas.

The third is planning for the future. That may include spot sampling around the province and intensive sampling along the edges of infected areas to try to determine if the disease is spreading. It will also include continuous, intensive, herd reduction in the affected areas.

What is Chronic Wasting Disease?

Chronic Wasting Disease is a fatal disease of the central nervous system that affects mule deer, white-tailed deer and elk. Current scientific research suggests that free ranging deer are more susceptible to Chronic Wasting Disease than elk.

Where does Chronic Wasting Disease exist in the wild?

Saskatchewan Environment has been monitoring Chronic Wasting Disease in mule deer, white-tailed deer and elk since 1997. As of August 31, 2004, 34 cases of Chronic Wasting Disease, 22 of which were found in the fall of 2003, have been confirmed in three areas in western Saskatchewan. The disease was found in three mule deer taken from the Manito Sand Hills south of Lloydminster in Wildlife Management Zone 46; in 28 mule deer and one white-tailed deer taken north of Swift Current in Wildlife Management Zones 13E and 14E and in one mule deer and one white-tailed deer from northeast of Lloydminster in Wildlife Management Zones 47 and 68S.

What is the Chronic Wasting Disease Management goal?

The goal of the Chronic Wasting Disease Management program is to minimize the impact of the disease on wild deer and elk. Current science indicates that the most effective way to control the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease is to reduce the number of animals in Herd Reduction Areas where the disease has been found.

Herd reduction measures will be evaluated annually. If no new positive cases are found for five consecutive years, the Herd Reduction Areas will be considered free of Chronic Wasting Disease. If positive cases are detected, herd reduction efforts will continue and the Herd Reduction Area may be expanded.

How long will it take to achieve this goal?

Current science indicates that annual, statistically valid monitoring for five years is required in an area, with no positives being detected, before an area can be considered disease free. This approach is being applied on domestic facilities through the Mandatory Surveillance Program operated by Saskatchewan Agriculture Food and Rural Revitalization and the national Chronic Wasting Disease Certification Program operated by the Canadian Food Inspection Agency.

What is the Chronic Wasting Disease control program for 2004?

- 1) reduce prevalence and control the spread of Chronic Wasting Disease from the three Herd Reduction Areas where the disease has been found by harvesting as many mule deer and white-tailed deer as possible;
- 2) move away from testing samples taken everywhere in the province to an intensive testing program focused on the Herd Reduction Areas; and
- 3) maintain hunter participation and public support for CWD management and report on the status of the disease through publications and media outlets.

What are the 2004 Chronic Wasting Disease Monitoring Areas?

Previous test results suggest that the disease may be limited to three areas in the west-central and northwest agricultural regions of the province. The 2004 program will focus on Wildlife Management Zones in these regions of the province with emphasis on three designated Herd Reduction Areas. Test results from the rest of the province suggest that, if the disease is present at all, it is at a very low prevalence of less than 0.5 percent.

How can hunters take part in the Chronic Wasting Disease Control program?

Free Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permits will be available to hunters to harvest mule deer and white-tailed deer in the Herd Reduction Areas. Hunters using the free permits may submit the heads of the animals they take for testing for Chronic Wasting Disease. **Only samples taken from the herd reduction areas on a chronic wasting disease control permit will be tested free-of-charge.**

In order to focus limited resources on testing animals from the Herd Reduction Areas Saskatchewan Environment will not be collecting or testing head samples from animals harvested outside of the Herd Reduction Areas or from animals taken within the Herd Reduction Areas while using an archery mule deer, Draw mule deer or white-tailed deer licence.

Hunters who wish to have their animals tested from these areas or harvested on these licences may take their head sample to Prairie Diagnostic Services in Saskatoon (52 Campus Drive) or Regina (4840 Wascana Parkway). The cost of the test is \$90 per sample.

Where are the Herd Reduction Areas?

The objective is to reduce the mule deer and the white-tailed deer herds within the Herd Reduction Areas where positives have been found by offering hunters free Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permits. The Herd Reduction Areas are:

- HRA 14: all of Wildlife Management Zones 12, 13E, and 14E east of the Lancer Ferry;
- HRA 46: a portion of the Manito Sand Hills in Wildlife Management Zone 46; and
- HRA 47: a portion of the Bronson Forest in Wildlife Management Zone 68S and an area northwest of St. Walburg in Wildlife Management Zone 47.

A detailed map of each area will be available to hunters when they pick up their free Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permits.

Where can hunters get a free Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permit and where can samples be dropped off?

Free *antlerless and either-sex* Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permits are available at the following locations:

| LOCATION | HOURS OF OPERATION | CONTROL PERMITS AVAILABLE | ACCEPTS HEAD SAMPLES FOR TESTING |
|---|--|---------------------------|----------------------------------|
| SASKATCHEWAN ENVIRONMENT OFFICES: | | | |
| SASK. LANDING PROVINCIAL PARK | Monday to Friday - 8:00AM to NOON and 1:00PM to 4:30PM | YES | YES |
| REGINA SASKATOON PRINCE ALBERT NORTH BATTLEFORD MEADOW LAKE MOOSE JAW MELVILLE | Monday to Friday - 8:00AM to NOON and 1:00PM to 5:00PM | YES | YES |
| SWIFT CURRENT LOON LAKE | Monday to Friday - 8:00AM to NOON and 1:00PM to 4:30PM | YES | YES |
| LLOYDMINSTER | Monday and Thursday - 8:00AM to NOON and 1:00PM to 4:30PM | YES | YES |
| PIERCELAND | Monday to Thursday - 9:00AM to NOON and 1:00PM to 5:00PM | YES | YES |
| LEADER OUTLOOK | Tuesday and Thursday - 8:00AM to NOON and 1:00PM to 5:00PM | YES | YES |
| YORKTON | Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday - 8:00AM to 1:00PM | YES | YES |
| RURAL MUNICIPAL OFFICES: | | | |
| SENLAC | Monday to Friday - 8:00AM to NOON and 1:00PM to 4:00PM | YES | YES |
| MARSDEN | Monday to Friday - 8:00AM to NOON and 1:00PM to 5:00PM | YES | YES |
| MACKLIN | Monday to Friday - 6:30AM to NOON and 1:00PM to 5:00PM | YES | YES |
| UNITY | Monday to Friday - 9:00AM to NOON and 1:00PM to 4:30PM | YES | YES |
| NEILBURG | Monday to Thursday - 8:30AM to NOON and 1:00PM to 4:30PM (Friday closes at 4:00PM) | YES | YES |
| OTHER LOCATIONS: | | | |
| Shep's Sports Centre Lloydminster | Monday to Saturday 9:00AM to 6:00PM | YES | YES |
| Sid's Service Esso Marsden | Monday to Saturday 8:30AM to 5:30PM | YES | YES |
| North Park Gas-Up Macklin | Monday to Saturday 6:00AM to 11:00PM | YES | YES |
| The Meat House Paradise Hill | Monday to Friday 9:00AM to 5:00PM | YES | YES |
| Kim's Service St. Walburg | Monday to Friday 6:00AM to 10:00PM | YES | YES |
| J&E Convenience Unity | Monday to Saturday 6:30AM to 11:00PM | NO | YES |
| Petro Canada Neilburg | Monday to Saturday 7:00AM to 8:00PM | NO | YES |

What are the rules for using a Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permit?

In all Herd Reduction Areas, hunters must first turn in their **two antlerless** head samples from a **Herd Reduction Area** before being eligible to obtain an **either-sex** Control Permit which is valid for either whitetail or mule deer. It is a condition of the Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permit that the holder submits any **unused permits** to a Saskatchewan Environment office at the end of the hunt. A 2004 Wildlife Habitat Certificate must be purchased to validate a Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permit. All regular hunting regulations apply to the use of a Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permit, including the dress codes, ATV use, hunting hours, landowner access, etc.

HUNTING REGULATIONS

In Herd Reduction Area 14 (all of Wildlife Management Zones 12, 13E and 14E, east of the Lancer Ferry):

- permits are valid from October 1 to December 31, 2004 (**Sask. residents only**);
- due to grazing requirements hunting is not permitted in Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park until October 15 and Matador Pasture until November 1;
- up to two antlerless permits are available at a time;
- a hunter who turns in **two** antlerless heads using Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permits may obtain **one** either-sex Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permit;
- additional antlerless and either-sex permits may be obtained by using the same process;
- heads must be turned in to a designated sample collection point before requesting additional permits. Permits are available at all collection points except the J&E Convenience Store in Unity and the Petro Canada in Neilburg;
- hunters may use all legal firearm types to hunt while using a Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permit in all parts of HRA 14 (Wildlife Management Zones 12, 13E and 14E, east of the Lancer Ferry) including Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park;
- Vehicles are restricted to designated roads within Saskatchewan Landing Provincial Park. Vehicles, including ATVs, may not leave the road for any purpose, and
- Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permits are valid for mule deer and/or white-tailed deer.

In Herd Reduction Area 46:

- permits are valid from November 1 to December 31, 2004 (**Sask. residents only**);
- up to two antlerless permits are available at a time;
- a hunter who turns in **two** antlerless heads using Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permits may obtain **one** either-sex Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permit;
- additional antlerless and either-sex permits may be obtained by using the same process;
- heads must be turned in to a designated sample collection point before requesting additional permits. Permits are available at all collection points except the J&E Convenience Store in Unity and the Petro Canada in Neilburg;
- hunters may use all legal firearm types to hunt while using a Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permit in HRA 46; and
- Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permits are valid for mule deer and/or white-tailed deer.

In Herd Reduction Area 47:

- permits are valid from October 1 to December 31, 2004 (**Sask. residents only**);
- up to two antlerless permits are available at a time;
- a hunter who turns in **two** antlerless heads using Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permits may obtain **one** either-sex Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permit;
- additional antlerless and either-sex permits may be obtained by using the same process;

- heads must be turned in to a designated sample collection point before requesting additional permits. Permits are available at all collection points except the J&E Convenience Store in Unity and the Petro Canada in Neilburg;
- hunters may use all legal firearm types to hunt while using a Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permit in HRA 47; and
- Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permits are valid for mule deer and/or white-tailed deer.

How Do I Prepare and Care for a Sample?

All hunters submitting samples for CWD testing should:

- remove the head of any mule deer or white-tailed deer. The hunter may detach the antlers for mounting but, when doing so, try to remove as little of the brain as possible and place a moist paper towel over the exposed brain;
- place the sample in a bag and freeze the sample as soon as possible;
- take the sample to the nearest Saskatchewan Environment office or Collection Point where you will receive a three-part Tracking Tag;
- place the Inside Bag Tag inside the bag, attach the Outside Bag Tag to the outside of the bag, and retain the Tracking Number portion of the tag. This Tracking Number is to be used as identification for each sample submitted and for obtaining your test results.

Hunters are reminded to provide complete information in legible handwriting. Please include; wildlife habitat certificate number, name, address, phone number and the date/location where the animal was taken.

If a sample tests positive, Saskatchewan Environment will contact the hunter regarding disposal of the meat and to identify the geographic location where the animal was shot. Samples submitted without complete information will not be tested.

Hunters should be aware that samples that have deteriorated (repeatedly frozen and thawed) or animals that have been shot through the head cannot be tested for Chronic Wasting Disease. Advances in testing techniques means fawns can now be tested.

What are hunters expected to do with the game meat?

Free ranging game animals and game birds in Saskatchewan are generally in good health and safe for human consumption. Hunters interested in taking an animal under a Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permit must ensure that the animal is properly handled and the meat is not wasted.

Hunters are encouraged to debone the animal; bag the meat, with the meat seal attached to the bag and freeze the meat until the test results become available. In the rare event that the sample is positive Saskatchewan Environment will contact the hunter directly.

What precautions should hunters take when handling the carcass of a deer or elk?

- 1) wear rubber gloves when field dressing carcasses;
- 2) minimize handling of brain or spinal tissues/fluids and wash hands afterward;
- 3) debone carcasses and avoid consuming the brain, spinal cord, spleen and lymph nodes;
- 4) when taking an animal to a meat processing facility request that your meat be processed separately from other wild meat; and
- 5) if a harvested animal appears unhealthy contact the local Saskatchewan Environment conservation officer.

Commonly Asked Questions

How soon will test results be available?

Test results for animals taken under a Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permit should be available within six weeks from the time the sample is submitted.

Does Chronic Wasting Disease pose a risk to human health?

Although much remains unknown about Chronic Wasting Disease, Saskatchewan Health and other health authorities indicate that Chronic Wasting Disease has not been shown to pose a risk to the health of humans.

Is the meat from wild deer or elk infected with Chronic Wasting Disease safe for human consumption?

Although public health experts agree that there is no known scientific evidence to indicate that Chronic Wasting Disease can affect humans, consumption of meat from an animal you know has been confirmed positive for Chronic Wasting Disease or any other disease is not recommended.

Is Chronic Wasting Disease transmissible to traditional domestic livestock?

Current scientific research indicates there is no natural transmission of Chronic Wasting Disease from infected wild animals to traditional domestic livestock.

What should hunters do if they see or kill a deer or elk that appears to be sick?

Call the local Conservation Officer or the Resource Stewardship Branch in Regina by calling (306) 787-2314.

Where can I get test results?

Test results for animals taken using a Chronic Wasting Disease Control Permit will be posted on the Internet (wildlife.usask.ca/cwd2004) or can be obtained by phoning 1-800-567-4224. Hunters can access individual test results by entering their name and a five-digit tracking tag number, which they will be given when they submit the head(s) for testing.

Hunters whose samples tested positive for Chronic Wasting Disease will be contacted by Saskatchewan Environment directly to determine the precise location of the kill and to inform the hunter on how to dispose of the meat.

Hunters who wish to test animals taken while using an archery mule deer, Draw mule deer or white-tailed deer licence, whether outside or from within an HRA, will be responsible for arranging their own testing and for obtaining their own test results.

How can I obtain more information?

Contact your local Conservation Officer or the Resource Stewardship Branch at (306) 787-2314 or by calling 1-800-567-4224.

Table 1: Summary of the provincial CWD sampling effort; 1997 - 2003

| Year | WTD | MD | Elk | Total/year | Test Negative | Test Positive |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|------------|---------------|---------------|---------------------|
| 1997 | 36 | 2 | 0 | 38 | 38 | none |
| 1998 | 18 | 91 | 2 | 111 | 111 | none |
| 1999 | 57 | 79 | 44 | 180 | 180 | none |
| 2000 | 726 | 185 | 89 | 1,000 | 999 | 1 MD |
| 2001 | 2,294 | 1,232 | 340 | 3,866 | 3,865 | 1 MD |
| 2002 | 2,439 | 3,386 | 185 | 6,010 | 6,000 | 8 MD / 2 WT |
| 2003 | 1,876 | 2,784 | 149 | 4,809 | 4,787 | 22 MD |
| Total | 7,446 | 7,759 | 809 | 16,014 | 15,980 | 32 MD / 2 WT |

