

Hello,

The NYS Department of Environmental Conservation has issued the following press release:

Regulations Issued to Protect NYS Deer Population from Chronic Wasting Disease

Emergency Measures Restrict Importation of Certain Deer Species

Disease Could Devastate NY's Deer Population and Result in Severe Economic Repercussions on the State's Sportsman Industry

The New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Department of Environmental Conservation today announced emergency regulations to prohibit the importation of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) susceptible deer into the State. The protection of the state's deer population is important not only to the balance of the ecosystem but also is critical to supporting the hundreds of thousands of sportsmen and women whose recreational activities contribute some \$780 million in economic impact statewide.

"These emergency measures will help mitigate the risk of CWD taking a firm hold here in New York State," said State Acting Agriculture Commissioner James B. Bays. "I'm a hunter and an avid outdoorsman, and keeping New York's wild and captive deer herds healthy will help protect multi-million dollar industries that create jobs and provide recreational opportunities for hundreds of thousands of New Yorkers. From our agency's perspective, the most important thing that we can do is limit the exposure of deer to CWD. That's exactly what these regulations will do."

DEC Commissioner Joe Martens said, "New York State has a long tradition of deer hunting and deer management. It is imperative that we remain vigilant and prevent Chronic Wasting Disease from entering the State. These regulations will bolster existing protections already in place in New York and help to maintain a vibrant population of our most sought after game species. This show of stewardship help will ensure that sportsmen and sportswomen continue to have great deer hunting opportunities throughout the state."

The emergency regulations provide a ban on imports of specific species between November 16, 2013 and August 1, 2018. These species include Rocky Mountain elk, red deer, mule deer, black-tailed deer, white-tailed deer, sika deer, and moose.

Currently 19 states including New York prohibit the importation of live deer.

CWD is a fatal, neurologic disease to species of deer caused by a disease agent called a prion, which eventually destroys the brain tissue of infected animals. Prions are shed by infected animals in their saliva, feces and urine. The time from infection to the first outward signs of illness (animals appear weak and unsteady) may be two years or longer. Soil contaminated with CWD prions cannot be decontaminated and can remain as a source of CWD exposure to wild deer for years. At the present time, the only accepted means of diagnosis must be performed after an animal suspected of being infected with CWD is dead.

The primary tool for preventing spread of CWD is the USDA Herd Certification program, which requires herds that wish to ship animals interstate to undergo a five year certification process involving surveillance testing and maintenance of herd inventories. While the program has helped slow the spread of CWD, it cannot guarantee that certified herds will remain CWD-free. Despite the best efforts of qualified animal health professionals, CWD has arisen in four new states (PA, MO, MN, IA) since 2010 and all were participating in the Herd Certification program. The source of the most recent detection of CWD in both captive and wild deer in Pennsylvania remains unknown twelve months after the initial detection. Farms in other states purchased animals from the original infected herd in Pennsylvania; some escaped and some remain unaccounted for. Absent these regulations, states with potentially infected deer populations would be allowed to export deer to New York.

"If we continue to allow imports, we could receive CWD exposed deer or elk that originated in one state and subsequently passed through a facility in a third state," said State Veterinarian, Dr. David Smith. "That's not a risk we're willing to take here in New York. CWD is extremely difficult to detect and control and once present, the costs to the wild deer population, captive deer owners, and the entire state are high. We do not want this disease proliferating throughout our state's valuable wild populations and captive deer herds. New York will continue to work with stakeholders and animal health professionals as these important regulations move forward."

The costs of states to deal with outbreaks in CWD in terms of resources and tax dollars are tremendous. Prevalence rates in some parts of Wisconsin are over 20 percent just 10 years after the introduction of CWD into the state, costing the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources \$14 million the first year alone, with much of the money pulled from other wildlife programs.

Furthermore, the economic impact that CWD could have on New York State is considerable. Based on the most recent data, New York's wild deer herds have a \$780.5 million economic impact in the state, while the economic impact of captive deer is \$13.2 million. There are an estimated 823,000 hunting licenses in New York and the state ranks third in the nation in residential hunters. In 2011, New York was fourth in the nation in spending by hunters and generated an estimated \$290 million in state and local taxes.

According to the latest data, there are 433 facilities across New York State that currently hold captive deer. Of these facilities, 25 imported a total of 400 CWD-susceptible deer from January 1, 2011 through March 29, 2013.

New York will still permit the importation of deer semen for artificial insemination. Zoos accredited by the Association of Zoos and Aquariums will also be allowed to still import CWD-susceptible species.

Bruce L. Akey, MS DVM, executive director, Animal Health Diagnostic Center, College of Veterinary Medicine, Cornell University, said: "The Cornell University College of Veterinary Medicine Animal Health Diagnostic Center (AHDC) includes internationally recognized experts on the transmission of disease and the ecology of diseases in wildlife populations. Chronic Wasting Disease is a serious threat to New York's wild white-tailed deer herd. With recent confirmation of CWD in Pennsylvania, our disease specialists are very concerned that CWD may once again be detected in New York. It is entirely appropriate that New York's regulatory agencies, the Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Department of Environmental Conservation, take all reasonable measures to keep CWD out of New York. Given that there is no test currently available to detect CWD in live animals prior to movement, strong prevention measures are the only reasonable and economical way of managing CWD. Once CWD is confirmed in a population of white-tailed deer, the ecological and economic consequences will be catastrophic. We applaud the recent regulation prohibiting the importation of live captive white-tailed deer, the highest known risk factor for CWD."

Chuck Parker, president, New York State Conservation Council, said: "The New York State Conservation Council takes pride in being a major voice for the Sportsmen in New York for over 80 years. All of our positions and policies are the majority consensus of our membership. The voting representatives of the NYSCC through the affiliations of their local clubs represent upwards of 330,000 sportsmen in this state. The whitetail deer population in New York is enjoyed by sportsmen and outdoor enthusiast alike. The tradition of hunting has a proud history in New York and still offers an excellent opportunity for the sportsmen today. Along with the opportunity to hunt deer comes the economic impact to the state of nearly \$800 million from deer hunting. Chronic Wasting Disease, if it was to be found in our wild deer population would create a serious environmental, recreational, and economic impact in New York. The New York State Conservation Council is strongly committed to supporting actions both by the Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Department of Environmental Conservation to ensure that Chronic Wasting Disease never again is found in New York."

Jason Kemper, chairman of the Conservation Fund Advisory Board, said: "The New York State Conservation Fund Advisory Board makes recommendations to state agencies on state government plans, policies, and programs affecting fish and wildlife. The wild white-tail deer population is extremely valuable to the State of New York, generating about \$780 million annually by hunting and associated businesses. License sales associated with deer hunting fund a majority of the Department of Environmental Conservation's fish and wildlife management programs. The health and integrity of New York's wild deer herd is vital to both our natural and hunting heritage as well as our economy. We applaud actions taken by the Department of Agriculture and Markets and the Department of Environmental Conservation to implement all reasonable measures to prevent CWD from ever again occurring in New York."

Mike Fishman, president of the New York Chapter of The Wildlife Society, said: "The New York Chapter of The Wildlife Society strongly supports the joint regulatory efforts of the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation and the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets to restrict the import of live, captive deer and other cervids to New York to prevent the reintroduction of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). CWD poses a significant threat to our wild deer populations. Reintroduction of the disease could have disastrous consequences on

an important ecological and economic resource in New York. This restriction is a necessary conservation measure to protect a very important wildlife resource."

Alan White, executive director of the Catskill Center, said: "The Catskill Center supports efforts by both the Department of Agriculture and Markets, and the Department of Environmental Conservation to reduce the chances that CWD would ever again be found in New York State. We support the newly proposed regulation to prohibit the importation of live captive white-tailed deer from out of state. These captive deer are a known risk factor for the spread of CWD. Deer hunting has deep and rich traditions in the Catskill Mountains, and it is vital that we ensure that the health of New York's wild white-tailed deer herd is not compromised by CWD."

A public hearing is scheduled to discuss the emergency regulations at noon on December 19, 2013 at the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets, 10B Airline Drive, Albany.