



NEWS RELEASE

Texas Animal Health Commission

"Serving Texas Animal Agriculture Since 1893"

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Dallam County Elk Tests Positive for Chronic Wasting Disease

Austin, TX – Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) officials confirmed Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in a free-ranging elk, harvested in Dallam County, on December 6, 2016. This is the first known elk in Texas to test positive for CWD.

TAHC and Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) discovered the CWD positive elk while conducting enhanced surveillance of cervids at TPWD Panhandle Containment Zone check stations. The National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa confirmed the presence of CWD prions in the tissue samples taken from the elk. Dallam County is located in the Texas Panhandle and borders Oklahoma and New Mexico.

"We commend all hunters and land owners who are submitting samples in the surveillance zone," said Dr. Andy Schwartz, TAHC Executive Director. "Surveillance is critical in detecting and preventing the inadvertent spread of CWD."

Hunters who harvest mule deer or white-tailed deer within the Trans-Pecos and Panhandle CWD Containment and Surveillance Zones are required by TPWD to bring their animals to a TPWD check station within 24 hours of harvest. You can find a check station near you at <http://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/diseases/cwd/#checkMap>.

CWD has been found in free-ranging elk across the United States, including the neighboring states of New Mexico and Colorado.

CWD was first recognized in 1967 in captive mule deer in Colorado. The first case of CWD in Texas was discovered in 2012 in free-ranging mule deer in an isolated area of far West Texas. The disease has since been detected in a total of 8 mule deer in that West Texas population located in the Hueco Mountains and 1 mule deer in Hartley County. CWD has also been confirmed in white-tailed deer breeding operations located in Medina and Lavaca counties.

CWD is a progressive, fatal disease of cervids that commonly results in altered behavior as a result of microscopic changes made to the brain of affected animals. An animal may carry the disease for years without outward indication, but in the latter stages, signs may include listlessness, lowering of the head, weight loss, repetitive walking in set patterns, and a lack of responsiveness. To date there is no evidence that CWD poses a risk to humans or non-cervids. However, as a precaution, the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and the World Health Organization recommend not to consume meat from infected animals.

For more information about CWD please visit http://www.tahc.texas.gov/animal_health/cwd/cwd.html and <http://tpwd.texas.gov/huntwild/wild/diseases/cwd/>.

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