

Manitoba Agriculture and Resource Development

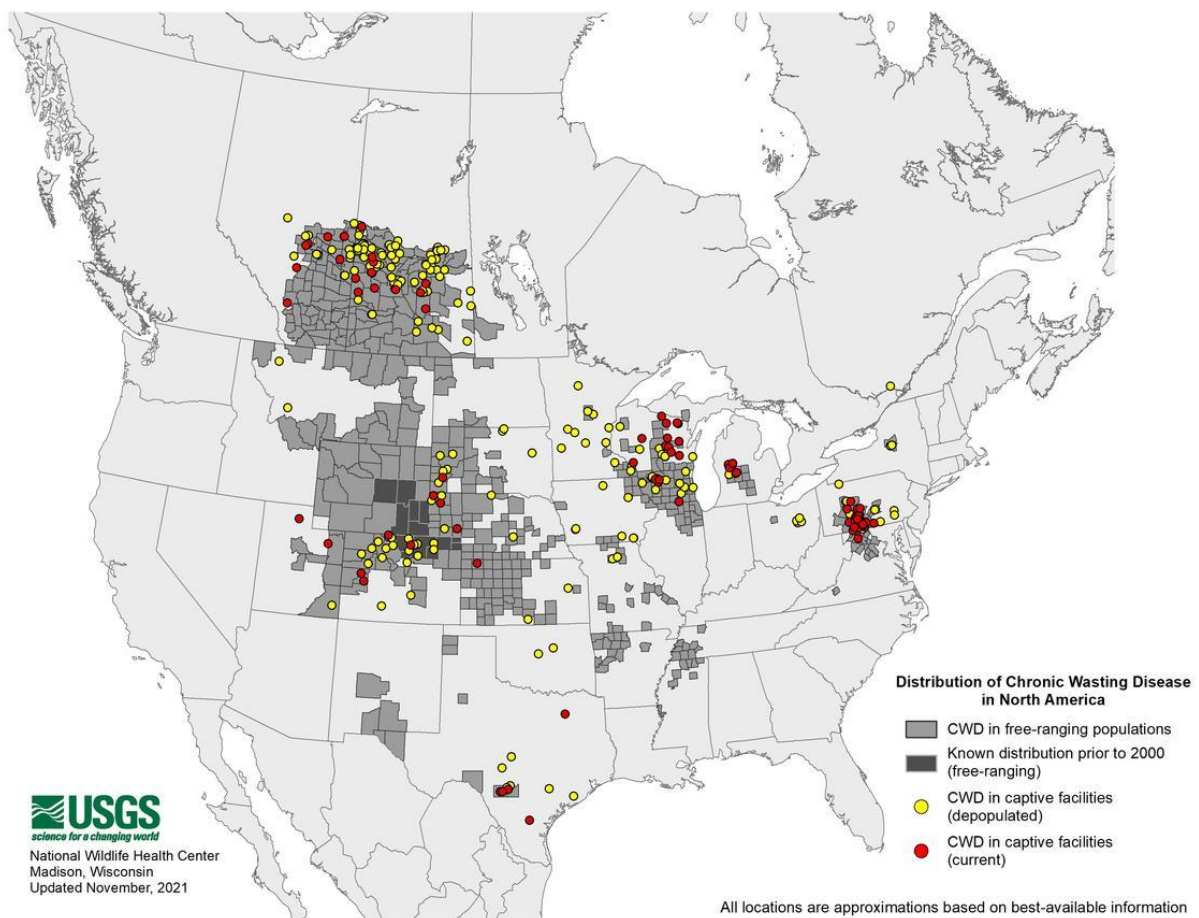
Chronic Wasting Disease Fact Sheet

- **What is Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)?**
 - Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a fatal disease of the central nervous system of deer, elk, moose and caribou, members of the cervid (deer) family. The disease is caused by one or more strains of self-propagating proteins, called prions. The prions, once transmitted, begin to replicate, first in the immune system (lymph nodes and tonsils) and later, in the brain, spinal cord and other organs. This disease belongs to a group of diseases called transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs). TSEs tend to be species-specific and scientists believe that most are not naturally transmissible between different species.
- **What are the disease symptoms and can an infected animal be cured?**
 - In early stages, infected animals can appear normal, while also spreading the disease. As the disease progresses, animals tend to be less alert, and fearful, with a general unhealthy look and obvious weight loss. As it progresses, infected animals become very thin and uncoordinated, with drooping ears and heads, are unaware of their surroundings and often have excessive drooling. At this point, death is near.
 - There is no cure for CWD. It is always fatal, with animals dying typically within two to three years and sometimes, as long as five years or more from the time of infection.
- **How is CWD spread?**
 - Infected animals can shed prions in saliva, feces, urine, and possibly, even after death, through their remains. Animals are infected by direct (animal-to-animal) contact transmission or by indirect transmission from prions deposited in the environment. It should be noted that prions can survive in the environment for an extended period of time (e.g., possibly five years or more.)
- **What happens to deer, elk, moose and caribou populations with CWD?**
 - In areas where CWD has become well-established, deer and elk populations decrease.

- With declining boreal woodland caribou populations across Canada, added CWD mortalities will increase the risk of extirpation of caribou populations.
- It is most important to take early, aggressive action to contain an outbreak of the disease.

- **Where is CWD currently found in North America?**

- CWD has been found in wild deer, elk and moose populations in Saskatchewan and Alberta and in many US states. There have also been CWD outbreaks on deer and elk farms in Saskatchewan, Alberta and Quebec and in many US states.



- **Can people, or livestock, get CWD?**

- Currently, there is no direct evidence that CWD can be spread to humans or animals, other than members of the deer family, though the science is still developing in this area. The World Health Organization (WHO), Health Canada, US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), and

numerous other public health agencies recommend against eating meat from CWD-positive animals. Available data suggest that risk of transmission to humans is low, but it is not zero. These public health agencies also recommend against feeding meat or other parts of CWD-infected cervids to other animals.

- **Where can I hunt and where is hunting being restricted?**

- In order to reduce the potential for spread of CWD-positive cases from the immediate area, hunting of all cervids (e.g., deer, elk, and moose) is temporarily prohibited for all resource users in a control area around the location where the CWD-positive case was found. A map of this area can be found [here](#).
- The mandatory sample submission area may be expanded in the near future to determine disease prevalence

- **Where is Sampling required?**

- By law, hunters are required to submit biological samples (head and upper neck) of elk and deer taken in the areas of GHA 22 west of PTH 83, as well as GHAs 5, 6, 6A, 11, 12, 13, 13A, 18 and 18B (west of PR 366), 18A, 18C, 23, 23A and 27. Please submit samples within 48 hours of harvesting to any of the department's [Drop-off Depots](#).
- The department is reviewing the CWD sample program and additional sampling will likely be required in the near future to determine disease prevalence, both from within the current mandatory zone and elsewhere.

- **Where is Sampling requested?**

- The department is interested in also testing samples from hunter harvested deer, elk and moose from along the southern USA border. Hunters who harvest an elk, moose or white-tailed deer taken in GHAs 28, 29, 29A, 31A, 31, 33, 35 or 35A, are requested to submit biological samples as part of the CWD Surveillance Program. Samples for other areas of the province will also be accepted for testing.

- **Where can I drop off my samples?**
 - There are sample drop-off depots located throughout the province. Depot locations can be found [here](#).
 - This list will be kept up-to-date as additional drop-off locations are added. Please submit samples within 48 hours of harvesting. Hunters are advised to call ahead to confirm the depot operation hours.

- **What information do you need?**
 - When submitting your sample, you will be expected to provide the date of kill, exact location of the kill, sex of the animal and contact information. Please keep your sample receipt number as this will allow you to confirm testing results.

- **How will I be notified?**
 - If a hunter's sample tests positive for CWD, they will be immediately notified by phone. All results of hunter harvested samples will be posted on our [website](#). Hunters will find their test results via the receipt number provided when they submitted their head for CWD testing at a drop-off depot. The province will be making every effort to expedite results, and more information will be released soon so hunters will know how to get their results quickly. The actual time to get test results will depend on the volume at the lab but it can take a few weeks. Options for additional testing capacity are being explored.