



In February Dave Bose, of Oberlin, filled out paperwork to receive two bags of deer meat harvested by the state Department of Wildlife and Parks, which want to test more animals in Decatur County for chronic wasting disease. — Photo by Kimberly Davis/The Oberlin Herald

13,000 wild deer tested in Kansas

Over 13,000 wild deer in Kansas have been tested for Chronic Wasting Disease since 1996 to find just four positive cases of the brain infection.

The disease, a fatal neurologic disease affecting members of the deer family, is similar to “mad cow” disease in bovines. Because the disease is fairly common in Colorado and spread to Nebraska, wildlife officials here have been on the lookout.

The first case in wild deer was detected three years ago in a white-tailed doe in Cheyenne County; the other cases were detected last year in three white-tailed bucks in Decatur County.

Through a surveillance grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, hunters can obtain free chronic wasting disease testing for deer harvested in areas of the state where the disease is being studied intensively. This year, those areas include Deer Management Units 1, 2, 3 in northwest Kansas.

Deer Management Unit 1, in the northwest corner of the state, is being sampled most intensively to study disease distribution. Hunters can take their animal to a test station to submit free samples for diagnosis.

If a test is positive, officials recommend the meat not be eaten, though there is no known case of this disease being transmitted to humans.

Chronic Wasting Disease test stations in northwest Kansas include James Zeigler in Atwood (785) 626-6042; Tumbleweed Taxidermy in Colby (785) 462-7943; Job Juleson in Goodland (785) 821-1207; Brian Somers in Goodland (785) 890-6654; Elmer Zimmer-

man in Hoxie (785) 675-3226; Mike’s Locker in Oakley (785) 672-9003; Patrick Inman in Oberlin (785) 475-7182; Dale’s Fish ‘n Fun in Oberlin (785) 475-2201; Cheyenne County Wildlife in St. Francis (785) 332-3089; Jason Finley in Atwood (785) 625-9435; Prairieland Animal Clinic in Goodland (785) 899-6166; Cook’s Feed and Seed in Gove (785) 938-4484; Paul Babcock in Hoxie (785) 675-3686; Countryside Veterinary Clinic in Oberlin (785) 475-3808; and John F. Helsel in Sharon Springs (785) 852-5247.

The disease also has been diagnosed in a captive elk herd in Harper County in 2001, but that animal had been imported from Colorado.

Many states ban the importation of whole deer carcasses from Kansas and other states where the disease has been found.

Typically, those states only allow hunters to bring back packaged meat, antlers with cleaned skull plate, capes, and finished taxidermy mounts.

The Kansas Department of Wildlife and Parks urges hunters to avoid baiting deer because it congregates the animals and makes it more likely they will spread disease to each other. To limit the human-assisted spread of chronic wasting disease, hunters are urged to not transport carcasses out of the county where the deer was harvested.

Since thousands of samples will be submitted for testing, results may take up to two months, but can be accessed by checking online at cwd.wp.state.ks.us or calling the wildlife Research and Survey Office at (620) 342-0658.

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