

Chronic Wasting Disease Detected in Trinity County Deer Breeding Facility

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Texas Parks and Wildlife Department (TPWD) and Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC) received confirmation of one case of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in a Trinity County deer breeding facility, marking the first detection in the county.

A two-year-old female white-tailed deer tested positive using postmortem testing conducted to meet CWD surveillance requirements for the facility. Texas A&M Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory (TVMDL) initially analyzed the samples, and the National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Iowa confirmed the CWD detections.

CWD has an incubation period that can span years, so the first indication of the disease in a herd is often found through routine surveillance testing rather than observed clinical signs. Early detection and proactive monitoring improve the state's response time to the detection of CWD and can greatly reduce the risk of further disease spread. TAHC and TPWD remind all deer breeders of requirements to report mortalities within seven days of detection and submit CWD test samples within seven days of collection.

CWD is a fatal neurological disease found in certain cervids including deer, elk, moose and other members of the deer family. This slow, progressive disease may not produce visible signs in susceptible species for several years after infection. As the disease process continues, animals with CWD may show changes in behavior and appearance. Clinical signs may include progressive weight loss, stumbling or tremors with a lack of coordination, loss of appetite, teeth grinding, abnormal head posture and/or drooping ears, and excessive thirst, salivation or urination.

In Texas, the disease was first discovered in 2012 in free-ranging mule deer along a remote area of the Hueco Mountains near the Texas-New Mexico border. CWD has since been detected in Texas captive and free-ranging cervids, including white-tailed deer, mule deer, red deer and elk.