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**Incident Specific Annex 9 – Agriculture Incidents**

**Appendix 10 – Chronic Wasting Disease**



Authorization & Concurrence

This Plan is considered operational and serves as the logistics guide for responding to animal disease–related emergencies in West Virginia. It supersedes all previous editions.

Approved: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ Date: \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_

State Animal Health Official

Record of Changes

All changes to this Plan are to be dated on the master copy kept by West Virginia Department of Agriculture.

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| **Date Posted** | **Change** | **Recommending Agency/ Individual** |
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Record of Concurrence

When assistance is requested by West Virginia Department of Agriculture, the following agencies have concurred to provide the role of supporting the response to the State of West Virginia during an emergency where the IS 9 – Agriculture Incidents is activated.

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| **Support Agency** | **Authorized Representative** | **Date of Concurrence** |
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# Purpose

**Incident Specific Annex 9 – Agriculture Incidents**

**Appendix 10 – Chronic Wasting Disease**

The purpose of this appendix is to outline the approach for the management of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in farmed cervids within West Virginia. The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) works with cervid owners to certify their herds and comply with the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) CWD Program Standards. These standards guide the state’s management of CWD within a farmed cervid operation along with other federal regulations outlined in Title 9 of the Code of Federal Regulations (CFR) parts 55 and 81.

# Scope

This appendix is intended to focus on the management of CWD in a farmed cervid operation. This appendix describes the concept of operations for the various response actions that would be required to mitigate and manage a CWD finding.

The management of CWD will require a coordinated response from WVDA and USDA. Both agencies have limited staff and resources and will need to collaborate with local and state partners to respond in an effective manner.

The management of CWD in free-ranging cervids is not covered by this appendix.

# Situation

CWD is a fatal, contagious, neurological disease that impacts cervid (i.e., deer, moose, elk) populations. CWD is a progressive disease with a long incubation period. Cervids may not show symptoms for years after being infected.

In 2005, CWD was first detected in free-ranging white-tailed deer in West Virginia. At the writing of this plan, WV DNR has a CWD containment area which includes Berkely, Grant, Hampshire, Hardy, Jefferson, Mineral, and Morgan Counties. In September 2021, CWD was first detected in a farmed cervid farm located within the WV DNR CWD containment area

Expansion of CWD in West Virginia will have an economic impact on the farmed cervid industry. Ideally, facility owners will implement protocols to prevent introduction into their farmed cervid herds. If CWD is identified at additional farmed cervid operations, a coordinated response will be required involving WVDA, USDA, WV DNR, and the industry.

# Planning Assumptions

1. Public-private partnerships are critical to mitigate the effects of a CWD finding.
2. Response actions will involve quarantine, revoking Herd Certification, additional testing requirements, enhanced biosecurity measures, and additional disinfection procedures.
3. New CWD findings have the potential to arise in WV’s wild deer and elk. If this occurs, the West Virginia Division of Natural Resources (WV DNR) will be the lead agency. WVDA will conduct surveillance in farmed cervid.

# Direction, Control, and Coordination

## Authority to Initiate Actions

This plan may be activated by the West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture, or their designees, as outlined in West Virginia Code 64-9-3.

## Incident Management

The WVDA will implement this management plan under their authority using internal staff. The interagency coordinated response will include a variety of agencies including USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) Veterinary Services (VS) and Wildlife Services (WS).

While not anticipated, if WVDA Incident Management Team (IMT) activation is determined necessary by the WVDA Policy Group, Incident Command System (ICS) principles will be utilized, and an Incident Command Post(s) (ICP) will be fully activated.

## Resource Request Process

If needed, the WVDA will directly request state supporting agency resources.

# Concept of Operations

This appendix details how the state will manage CWD in farmed cervids. The USDA CWD Program Standards will be used as a guide to determine the management strategies to be implemented. The standards outline the strategies used to manage the disease in farmed deer.

## General

Responding to a CWD detection in farmed cervids is within the statutory authority and mandate of WVDA as outlined in West Virginia Code 64-9-3.

As the lead agency, WVDA, under the direction of the Commissioner of Agriculture and in partnership with the USDA, will direct all animal disease investigation, surveillance, movement standstill, diagnostic, biosecurity, animal depopulation, carcass disposal, cleaning and disinfection, and recovery activities.

The primary and support agencies will coordinate as needed to manage the disease.

As described in the base Incident Support Annex Concept of Operations (IS-9, page 5), the key elements of animal disease management include the following: incident identification; incident management; communication and coordination; assessment, control, and containment; and recovery.

## Incident Identification

Incident identification for CWD would follow the steps mentioned in Incident Specific Annex 9.

## Incident Management

Incident management for an CWD response would follow the steps and structures mentioned in Incident Specific Annex 9.

## Assessment, Control, and Containment

### Diagnosis

Most CWD findings are detected from deceased animals, but new technologies for antemortem testing are being utilized and developed. CWD in late stages causes clinical signs in cervids which include long-term weight loss with loss of body condition, as well as increased drinking and urination**.**

Observations of clinical signs of CWD in farmed cervids requires immediate notification to the WVDA Animal Health Division. WVDA or USDA field staff will be deployed to the site as soon as possible. An assessment will be conducted, which may include laboratory testing.

Breeding farms must report all deaths 12 months of age and older immediately for sample collection by approved personnel. Samples will be shipped by WVDA to an approved National Animal Health Laboratory Network (NAHLN) laboratory for testing.

Any CWD suspect samples will be forwarded from the NAHLN lab to the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Ames, Iowa for confirmation testing. WVDA may initiate some level of response based upon a laboratory result of presumptive non-negative for CWD at a NAHLN lab.

WVDA also may initiate an investigation of suspect animals in West Virginia that came from another state (trace). During these trace investigations, WVDA may initiate actions after receiving information about a trace dealing with a suspect animal.

The WVDA may quarantine the suspect site until laboratory results rule out CWD.

### Notification

The following response and notification measures may be taken on a non-negative premises:

A quarantine will be placed on the premises

The premises will be defined as an infected premise; and,

The premises CWD Herd Certification will be revoked.

The West Virginia State Veterinarian will notify the WVDA Executive Team. Any additional notification procedures will be implemented as written in the WVDA Notification Standard Operating Guide.

If a non-negative result is received, WVDA will notify the premises owner first. Once this notification has occurred, WVDA will follow the CWD Notification Plan outlined in Attachment 1. This notification plan includes internal WVDA contacts as well as support agencies and industry representatives. WVDA will distribute a Program Notice to all licensed cervid operations within the state. An example of the Program Notice is outlined in Attachment 2.

The WVDA will consider the development of a press release regarding the situation. If deemed necessary, the WVDA Communications Director will coordinate this effort.

### Quarantine/Containment Area

West Virginia Code provides the Commissioner of Agriculture or designees the authority to quarantine suspect or infected premises. In the case of a suspect CWD diagnosis, the potentially infected operation will be quarantined. The quarantine will request limited personnel, vehicle, and equipment movement on and off site and will provide suggestions for proper cleaning and disinfection of personnel, vehicles, and equipment. For CWD, additional quarantines may be imposed on epidemiologically linked operations. Premises that are quarantined for CWD will have their CWD Herd Certification revoked.

Quarantines may be released after herd plan requirements are met or when epidemiolocal investigation is completed. More information on the Herd Plan is found later in this document under Herd Plan Development. Release of a quarantine is determined by the Commissioner of Agriculture or their designees.

WV DNR may conduct surveillance in free ranging cervids around the premises and may identify a larger containment area around a CWD-Positive Herd. Licensed operations within the containment area will be notified. Premises within the containment area may need to meet additional requirements.

### Epidemiology and Tracing

Epidemiology and tracing are an important part of identifying the spread of CWD. Tracing may include identifying the movements of cervids, animal products, vehicles, feedstuffs, and other vectors.

Any CWD-susceptible cervid that has comingled with a CWD-positive animal in the last five years is designated as a CWD-Exposed Animal. When animals within a herd test positive for CWD, the herd is termed to be a CWD-Positive Herd.

For CWD-Exposed Animals, WVDA and USDA will engage in a trace-forward, trace-back and pass-through epidemiolocal investigations. This investigation will focus on animals that may have resided in the CWD-positive herd within the past five years.

The graphic included on the next page is from the USDA CWD Program Standards. All the CWD-exposed cervids should be traced forward and back to include the five years since the exposure.



### Herd Plan Development

Working with the premises owner, WVDA will develop a Herd Plan specific to the infected or exposed premises, Attachment 3. This plan will outline the CWD management plan for the CWD-Positive or CWD-Exposed Herds. USDA CWD Program Standards will be considered when developing management strategies.

The Herd Plan will include requirements for records, surveillance, testing, biosecurity, and disease management. Disease management strategies may include depopulation or long-term quarantine. The WVDA will work with the premises owner to determine the management practices to be utilized. The Herd Plan must be signed by the owner, WV State Veterinarian, and the USDA-APHIS Area Veterinarian in Charge.

Depopulation is one mechanism used to mitigate CWD. Animals destined for depopulation will be humanely treated from the time they are identified for depopulation until the time they are depopulated. Depopulation must be performed as rapidly and humanely as possible. Depopulation will follow the American Veterinary Medical Association’s guidelines. Depopulation of susceptible wildlife will be assessed and may be encompassed in the response efforts for an CWD detection in farmed cervids.

A written, signed Herd Plan must be completed to receive federal indemnity. Quarantined herds must meet the requirements outlined in the Herd Plan before a quarantine may be released.

### Disposal

CWD requires proper disposal procedures for carcasses. WVDA, West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection (WV DEP), and USDA APHIS will determine which option for carcass disposal will be chosen. Incineration, alkaline hydrolysis, landfill, and onsite burial are listed in the USDA CWD Program Standards, as options for disposal.

### Biosecurity

Procedures to prevent CWD spread will be implemented immediately on suspicion of CWD. Premises owners within the containment area will be encouraged to increase their biosecurity measures to reduce the potential for CWD spread.

Responders will observe proper biosecurity protocols. The biosecurity requirements will be operation-specific and set by the WVDA.

### Wildlife Surveillance

The WV Division of Natural Resources (WV DNR) will be responsible for wildlife surveillance and disease management. Upon notification of a non-negative test result for CWD in farmed cervids, WV DNR may establish a surveillance program to detect the presence of CWD in wildlife within and outside of the containment area. Surveillance may be passive, examining animals killed on roads or from hunting; or it can be active, relying on wildlife personnel selectively taking live animals for surveillance purposes.

## Appraisal and Indemnity

During an CWD response, indemnity and appraisal becomes a responsibility of the USDA. Decisions on the availability of indemnity funds will be made by the USDA-APHIS-Cervid Health Program. To receive indemnity, a Herd Plan must be developed and signed for the premises.

## Recovery

WVDA, in coordination with USDA, will determine when or how infected premises will be allowed to repopulate.

Additional recovery operations are outlined in Incident Support Annex 9 – Agriculture Incidents. Additional recovery operations include the tracking of costs associated with the response, response to media requests, and mental health.

# Responsibilities

Most state and federal agencies have emergency functions in addition to their normal, day-to-day activities. Each agency is responsible for developing and maintaining its own emergency management procedures. This section lists WVDA, state support agencies, industry, and USDA roles and responsibilities as they relate to a CWD incident.

WVDA will direct all response measures including those at the local level.

### West Virginia Commissioner of Agriculture

1. Serves as the WVDA administrator and policy leader.
2. Performs the duties outlined in West Virginia Code 19-9-2, *Duties and Powers of Commissioner*.

### West Virginia State Veterinarian and WVDA Animal Health Division

1. Directs CWD management within the farmed cervid population.
2. Coordinates with supporting agencies.
3. Coordinates and advises applicable premise owners, trade groups, and other relevant organizations.
4. Establishes quarantines and containment.
5. Determines changes to cervid movement requirements within the WV DNR containment area, if needed.
6. Provides personnel to support the response.
7. Notifies stakeholders and support agencies using the CWD Notification Plan outlined in Attachment 1.

### West VirginiaDivision of Natural Resources

1. Notifies the WVDA of post test results in wildlife cervid populations.
2. Notifies their stakeholders of non-negative results in farmed cervids.
3. Implements surveillance of free ranging cervids, when necessary.
4. Assists WVDA with response, if requested.

### WV Cervid Association(s)/National Cervid Association(s)

1. Provides disease information to cervid facility operators and the public in coordination with WVDA.

### WV Cervid Licensees

1. Comply with CWD Program Standards.
2. Implement expanded biosecurity and disease management protocols if their operation is in a WV DNR containment area.
3. If infected herd, determine method of CWD management on their premises (depopulation versus long-term quarantine).
4. If exposed herd, determine method of CWD management on their premises including depopulation, ante-mortem testing on white-tailed deer, or long-term quarantine.
5. Support the WVDA in the development of a Herd Plan for their facility if they are determined to be infected or exposed, to be signed alongside SAHO and AVIC.
6. Maintain WV cervid licensure.

## Federal Agencies

### United States Department of Agriculture

At the federal level, USDA has overall responsibility to coordinate national surveillance and preparedness activities, and implement eradication measures, in close coordination with state and local governments. USDA provides several critical services and functions through multiple areas of expertise as discussed below.

### USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services

1. Consulting with WVDA regarding management activities including quarantine, depopulation, disposal, cleaning and disinfecting, and epidemiological investigation.
2. Funding for compensation (indemnity), if available, to owners of depopulated animals as designated by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

### USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Wildlife Services

1. Assisting WVDA with handling and depopulation of farmed cervids.

# Authorities

## West Virginia

West Virginia Code 19-9, *Diseases Among Domestic Animals*, outlines the authorities related to responding to diseases among domestic animals.

## Federal

The United States Code of Federal Regulations, Title 9 – Part 55, Control Of Chronic Wasting Disease and Part 81 – Chronic Wasting Disease In Deer, Elk, And Moose outlines the authorities related to responding to CWD.

# Attachment 1: CWD Notification Plan

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| The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) State Veterinarian, or their designee, will be responsible for notifying the following parties of a non-negative result for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). The premises owner will receive the first notification after a non-negative result from an approved NAHLN laboratory, then the internal call list will receive notification. All other parties will receive a notification after NVSL confirmation. | |
|  | |
| Icon  Description automatically generated | Producer Notification  When WVDA receives non-negative results, it will trigger operational activities. When the premises owner is notified of the results, WVDA will explain the response process. This should include an explanation of quarantines, movement control, biosecurity practices, herd plans, depopulation, and indemnity. | |
|  |  | |
| Icon  Description automatically generated | Call List (non-negative result)   * + WVDA Commissioner and Executives   + WVDA program directors and animal health staff   + WV Division of Natural Resources (DNR) primary contact   + WV Cervid Farmers Association(s) and President(s)   + USDA Veterinary Services and USDA Wildlife Services | |
|  |  | |
| Icon  Description automatically generated | Call List (confirmed positive)   * + WVDA Commissioner and Executives   + WVDA program directors and animal health staff   + WV DNR primary contact[[1]](#footnote-1)   + WV Cervid Farmers Association(s) and Presidents[[2]](#footnote-2)   + USDA Veterinary Services and USDA Wildlife Services   + West Virginia Cervid Licensees   + West Virginia Zoos | |
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| Icon  Description automatically generated | External Notifications   * National Assembly of State Animal Health Officials * Press, if necessary * Other states that may be affected, if necessary | |

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# Attachment 2: Example Program Bulletin

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**PROGRAM BULLETIN**

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| **To:** | WV Licensed Deer Farms |
| **From:** | James L. Maxwell, DVM / Animal Health Division / State Veterinarian  Erika Alt, DVM / Animal Health Division / Assistant State Veterinarian  Jason Garrett / Animal Health Division / Program Specialist |
| **Date:** | January 15, 2022 |
| **Subject:** | Confirmed CWD finding in a WV Farmed Cervid Herd |

Animal Health Division of WVDA has received CWD IHC confirmation results from USDA-APHIS-VS-National-Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) from a second WV farmed cervid herd. The sample was collected by Dr. Alt after producer notification as required for any death loss. The six-year-old female white-tailed deer was a purchased addition to the farm. The CWD prion was detected in the lymph node but not in the obex. NVSL DNA analysis matches tissues samples with skin from the ear tag for all new herds to confirm the identity of the index animal.

This was the farm’s first death meeting the age requirement for CWD testing and the producer indicated the index deer had exhibited coughing for an extended period. All original deer stocked on this farm were from WV breeding farms. There has been no permitted movement or reported escapes from this farm since origination and the inventory inspections have been accurate. Tracing from the source farm has been completed and all farms involved have been notified and quarantined.

Significantly, the index animal had resided on two farms located within the WV DNR CWD containment area where CWD is endemic in wild WTD and WV DNR data (May 2021) depicts 451 positives confirmed in wild deer for the five-county area. We have discussed with the owners available options under the USDA CWD program standards, issued quarantine/ revocation of CWD Herd Certification, offered our regrets for this finding, and let them know we will work with them through this scenario. Options will be discussed in consultation with USDA-APHIS-VS Cervid Health program specialists in Fort Collins, CO.

As a result of previously announced awarded CWD funding, a WV CWD management plan workshop will be held on February 2, 2022 with a smaller working group of industry stakeholders including deer breeding farms, hunting preserves, deer associations, zoos/exhibitions with deer, WV DNR, and USDA. Shawn Schafer, NADeFA Executive Director, is also scheduled to attend. Once the plan is developed, an in-person tabletop exercise is planned for mid-May 2022 which will include all deer producers. Everyone’s input will be important for the future of WV’s deer farm industry.

Thanks everyone and stay tuned for future developments.

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# Attachment 3: Sample Herd Plan Template

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**Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Positive/Exposed Herd**

**and Premises Management Plan**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Herd Owner(s): |  |
| Premises Owner(s): |  |
|  |  |
| Doing Business As: |  |
| Federal Premises Identification: |  |
|  |  |
| Herd/Premises Address: |  |
| County: |  |
| GPS Coordinates - Latitude, Longitude: |  |
|  |  |
| Date: |  |
|  |  |
| Date of visual inventory of cervids: |  |
| Inventory of CWD-susceptible species: |  |

1. **Purpose of Herd Plan**

The herd plan is issued by the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (hereinafter “Department”) and the United States Department of Agriculture, Animal Plant Health Inspection Service, Veterinary Services (hereinafter “USDA APHIS VS”) and establishes requirements and standards which shall be implemented and followed by the herd owner and premises owner (herinafter “premises”) referenced above for the management of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) exposed animals and euthanasia/depopulation with indemnity of such CWD susceptible animals (whole herd) that are housed at this premises at the above address. This plan establishes measures to be implemented that are intended to minimize risks associated with the transmission of a CWD infectious agent from this infected premises to uninfected populations of susceptible species.

1. **History**

On the date referenced above, the premises was identified as a:

CWD positive herd via CWD immunohistochemistry (IHC) confirmation results from the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL). The herd has lost its CWD Herd Certification Program status and may re-enroll in the CWD Herd Certification Program only after entering into this herd plan.

CWD exposed herd based on the epidemiological investigation of a CWD-positive animal residing in another herd (or multiple herds) within the last five years. The herd has lost its CWD Herd Certification Program status and may re-enroll in the CWD Herd Certification Program only after entering into this herd plan.

1. **Inventory**

A visual inventory of the cervids on this premises was submitted on the date referenced above.

1. **CWD-Positive Herd**

The premises owner, by signing this document, is agreeing to:

Humanely euthanize/depopulate and remove all cervids on the premises and post-mortem CWD testing of the herd. Depopulation may include hunter harvesting and or slaughter with movements under permit.

Quarantine for five years since the last CWD-positive case, with or without selective culling of animals. All mortalities must be tested for CWD, and if additional CWD-positive cervids are identified, the five year quarantine will be restarted to the date of the last known case of CWD. The herd will remain under a suspended CWD Herd Certification Program until this herd plan is implemented and completed.

Ante-mortem CWD testing and genotyping using NVSL protocol and APHIS-approved procedures, outlined in the USDA CWD Program Standards for disease management purposes to reduce environmental contamination.

1. **CWD Exposed Herd**

The premises owner, by signing this document, is agreeing to:

Humanely euthanize/depopulate and remove all cervids on the premises and conduct post-mortem CWD testing of the herd. Depopulation may include hunter harvesting and or slaughter with movements under permit.

Quarantine for five years since the last exposure to a CWD-positive animal, with or without selective culling of animals. The herd will remain under a suspended CWD Herd Certification Program until a herd plan is implemented and completed. Time in quarantine may be lessened:

If the CWD-exposed herd contains only white-tailed deer – Whole herd ante-mortem IHC recto-anal mucosa-associated lymphoid tissue (RAMALT) CWD testing and genotyping using NVSL protocol and APHIS-approved procedures, outlined in the USDA CWD Program Standards.

If the CWD-exposed herd contains only white-tailed deer – Whole herd ante- mortem IHC medial retropharyngeal lymph nodes (MRPLN) biopsy CWD testing and genotyping using NVSL protocol and APHIS-approved procedures, outlined in the USDA CWD Program Standards.

At the discretion of the State Animal Health Official for a period of time as determined by a risk evaluation based on the findings of the epidemiological investigation.

1. **Disposal**

The following provisions apply to disposal of the carcasses of all euthanized/depopulated cervids and contaminated materials from the premises:

1. Transportation and disposal of exposed/infected carcasses and other contaminated materials will be conducted in accordance with the 2019 USDA APHIS VS CWD Program Standards, Part B7, Carcass Disposal (pages 51-52). The method of disposal will be:

Incineration

Alkaline hydrolysis

Onsite burial

Landfill

Name of landfill:

Other:

1. Disposal will also be in accordance with other existing federal, state, and local regulations
2. **Post Depopulation Requirements**
3. Records and Investigations: The premises owner shall, upon request, assist with any epidemiological investigation and make herd records required under the Department’s CWD Quarantine Order and records such as those related to individual animal information, animal movements, high risk animals and other relevant records as may be requested, available for inspection and copying by USDA APHIS VS and Department representatives.
4. Fencing Requirements:
   1. The premises owner shall maintain all external fences used to enclose the cervids and comply with the Department CWD Quarantine Order and 2019 USDA APHIS VS CWD Program Standards in a manner that will prevent ingress and egress of cervids until such time as the Quarantine is rescinded in writing.
   2. The premises owner agrees to allow inspections of these fences by USDA APHIS VS or Department representatives upon request.
   3. Any proposed changes to the perimeter fence will be submitted by the premises owner in writing for approval.
5. If any of the cervids tested have a result of Detected, the premises’ fallow period of 60 months for cervid species will begin on the date of euthanasia/depopulation.
6. **Other Requirements**

With proper notification, the premises owner shall, during normal business hours, allow the Department or USDA APHIS VS officials or both to enter the premises to inspect the facilities, property, fences, inventory records, and animals as the Department or USDA APHIS VS officials consider necessary to verify compliance with the provisions of this CWD Positive Herd and Premises Management Plan.

1. **Contingency**

If federal indemnity is not approved, this herd plan may be modified and resubmitted.

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|  |  |  |
| Premises Owner |  | Date |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| State Veterinarian / Director  Animal Health Division  West Virginia Department of Agriculture |  | Date |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
| Area Veterinarian in Charge, District 1  Pennsylvania / West Virginia  USDA APHIS Veterinary Services |  | Date |

1. WV DNR is responsible for notifying its stakeholders [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. WV Cervid Farmers Association(s) or President(s) will notify the relevant National Cervid Farmers Association(s) [↑](#footnote-ref-2)