

Agriculture and Forestry (AF) Quick Reference Guide for Producers on the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Voluntary Herd Certification Program (VHCP)

Background

The role of Regional Administrator and Status Assessor will be filled by Alberta Agriculture and Forestry.

Regional Administrator (RA) - Dr. Keith Lehman, 780-427-3448

Status Assessor (SA) - Norma Pronteau, 780-835-2238

While this document has been developed to assist producers as a quick reference guide for the CWD VHCP, it should not be relied upon as the sole source of direction for compliance with the VHCP, and it is the producer's responsibility to be familiar with the AF CWD VHCP Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) and Canadian Food Inspection Agency (CFIA) National Standards. In case of a discrepancy or dispute, the AF CWD VHCP SOP and the CFIA National Standards for the CWD VHCP will be relied upon for direction and requirements.

Producers who have been enrolled in the CWD VHCP prior to April 1, 2018 should note that this is not a new program; rather it is a revision to the program. As such, previously enrolled producers will retain their previous level or be eligible for advancement if their annual review documentation demonstrates compliance. The revised program does not require all previously enrolled herds to restart the program at level E.

Overview for New Applicants:

Starting on April 1, 2018, new applicants to the program must submit the following as one complete package to the SA to be considered for enrollment in the CWD VHCP:

- Form 1 – Application for Enrollment
- Form 3 – Annual Inspection
- Form 4 – Annual Inventory Report along with a copy of the working documents that have been verified and signed by the accredited veterinarian (AV)
- Form 5 – Site Plan

Overview for Annual Reviews:

Starting on April 1, 2018, producers enrolled in the VHCP will be required to submit the following documentation as one complete package to the SA for their annual review:

- Form 3 – Annual Inspection
- Form 4 – Annual Inventory Report along with a copy of the working documents that has been verified by the AV or alternate
- Form 5 – Site Plan required for all first time annual reviews under the revised program (2018-2019 review), and after that first year only if there have been any physical changes to the premises in the previous year
- Form 6 – Cervid Producer Perimeter Fence Attestation Report
- Form 7 – Transportation Vehicle Reports for any applicable animal movements
- Form 8 – Annual Escape/Intrusion Report

New Applications

1. Application for Enrollment – Form 1
 - a. Ensure all applicable tombstone information (name, address, contact information, etc.) is complete and your signature is present on the application form.
 - b. Ensure applicable tombstone information for your AV is complete, and their signature is present.
2. Initial Inventory
 - a. Each cervid in the herd must be identified with two official identification devices as per provincial regulations. Each cervid must also have one identifier which can be read from a distance; this may be an official tag or an unofficial tag that is linked to their official identification in Cervid Farming System (CFS). These identifiers are to be applied before each cervid reaches the age of 12 months.
 - b. During the enrollment year, your inventory must be verified by your AV and attached to Form 4.
3. Annual Inventory Report – Form 4
 - a. Systematically work through the totals in each row based on animal counts, totals in the inventory from CFS, and others. If totals are not in alignment, investigate discrepancies and provide explanations in the comment area of the form.
 - b. This review can also include an examination of movement permits (exports, imports, domestic) recent deaths on farm, recent slaughters, receipts from purchases and sales, although this information on animal exchanges should be captured in CFS.
 - c. The form must be signed by the producer and AV.
4. Site Plan – Form 5
 - a. The site plan should provide a diagram of the premises, drawn as close to scale as possible, and be signed by the producer and AV.
 - b. The site plan should include:
 - i. All structures to which cervids will have access
 - ii. All grazing areas to which cervids will have access
 - iii. Feed storage locations
 - iv. Water sources both natural (lakes, ponds, rivers, streams, etc.) and man-made (wells, water troughs, etc.)
 - v. Fencing, permanent and temporary
 - vi. Proximity to other farmed cervids
5. Annual Inspection – Form 3 must also be included and may assist in working through this as well as the information in Appendix I

Annual Inspections

1. Annual Inspection – Form 3
 - a. Work with your AV to complete Form 3. All blanks/check boxes must be completed, and the form must be signed by the producer and the AV.
 - b. Additional information on the expectations for each item in Form 3 can be found below in Appendix I.
 - c. At this time, the annual inspection must be completed annually and the form must be submitted to the SA as part of the annual review.
2. Current Inventory
 - a. Each cervid in the herd must be identified with two official identification devices as per provincial regulations. Each cervid must also have one identifier which can be read from a distance; this may be an official tag or an unofficial tag that is linked to their official identification in CFS. These identifiers are to be applied before each cervid reaches the age of 12 months.
 - b. The inventory must be verified, attached to Form 4, and submitted to the SA as part of each annual review. A third party must verify the inventory and sign the form every year.
 - c. Acceptable third parties include the AV, a CFIA inspector who is completing herd testing, or an AF inspector who is completing their inspection and has time to complete this work or is completing an inventory as part of their planned inspection.
3. Annual Inventory Report – Form 4
 - a. Form 4 will be completed and signed by the appropriate third party.
 - b. This form must be submitted to the SA as part of the annual review.
 - c. See item 3 under New Applications for further information on completion of the form.
4. Site Plan – Form 5
 - a. This form will be required as part of the first annual review after April 1, 2018 for farms that are currently enrolled in the VHCP. In other words, farms that are enrolled in the program and continuing on under the changes to the program that start April 1, 2018 must submit this to the SA as part of their first annual review under the new standards.
 - b. After that, this form is only required if physical changes to the premises have been made in the past year. This could include expansion of the farm, movement of feeders/water sources, new water sources, changes to feed storage, etc.
5. Cervid Producer Perimeter Fence Attestation Report – Form 6
 - a. This form should be completed each time an inspection of the fencing is completed including notes of any deficiencies and corrective actions.
 - b. The fence must be inspected at least once per year. This can be done by the AV at the time of the annual inspection. Alternatively, the producer can perform the inspection and complete the form. In this case, the inspection must be done within the three months prior to the overall annual farm inspection (Form 3) by the AV.
 - c. Multiple inspections during the year are recommended, and are likely already taking place. Such inspections can be recorded on this form.
 - d. This form must be submitted to the SA as part of the annual review.

6. Transportation Vehicle Report – Form 7
 - a. This form must be completed for each applicable transport, and submitted to the SA as part of the annual review.
 - b. Applicable transports are referred to in the national standards and the provincial standard operating procedures. However, as an alternative guideline, consider the following:
 - i. Use of the herd owner's trailer to transport cervids of lower status on behalf of another farm owner – the vehicle must be cleaned and disinfected before returning to the farm.
 - ii. Use of the herd owner's trailer to transport cervids away from and back to the farm (for example, to a show) – must be cleaned and disinfected after returning.
 - iii. Use of someone else's trailer to deliver cervids to the farm – trailer must be cleaned and disinfected prior to loading those cervids.
7. Annual Escape / Intrusion Report – Form 8
 - a. This form must be completed and signed for any escapes of farmed cervids or intrusions of wild cervids and submitted to the SA immediately following an event.
 - b. If no escapes or intrusions occur, the producer must complete the form at the end of the year and submit it to the SA with indication of no such events as part of the annual review package.
 - c. These events should be reviewed with the AV during the annual inspection.

Appendix I – Information to be considered when completing Annual Inspection – Form 3

1. Perimeter Fence and Gate Height – provide minimum height of each
2. Overall Facility Condition – This is a general statement regarding the acceptability of the premises for raising cervid animals. It may take into consideration Standards of Care, industry norms or accepted practices, etc. with a specific focus on minimizing risk of introduction of chronic wasting disease.
3. Handling Facility Condition – This is another general statement regarding the handling facility and whether it is appropriate for cervid handling and minimizes risks to animal welfare.
4. Freezer Storage Condition – Includes a review of the security of the location as well as the ability to maintain the heads in a frozen state prior to submitting for testing. It can also include a review of how frequently or timely heads are submitted for testing after death.
5. Site Plan Current – review to ensure existing site plan is current and no changes to the physical premises have occurred since the last review.
6. Transport Reports – review to ensure reports exist for applicable movements. This can be cross-referenced with a movement report from CFS.
7. Water Sources – ensure that wild cervids are unable to share standing water sources with farmed cervids.
8. Feed Sources – ensure that feed is inaccessible to wild cervids immediately after harvest. Hay should be removed from fields as soon as it is baled, grain should not be left lying out on the ground, and all feeds should be stored in a manner that prevents wild cervid access.
9. Taxidermy and Carcass Processing – for farms that perform either task on the premises, ensure there is physical separation from farmed cervids and adequate biosecurity to prevent CWD transmission from these products to the farmed cervid population.
10. Perimeter Fencing – a complete examination of the exterior perimeter fence to ensure height and condition are acceptable to prevent escape or intrusion. Inspection by producer, AV, or both is required.
11. Biosecurity Enhanced – This is an optional section that is recommended for herds that are located in areas where CWD is enzootic in the wild cervid population. It includes record keeping (visitor/farm service provider logs, personnel training on biosecurity principles) and measures to prevent direct or indirect transmission of CWD are implemented:
 - a. Fence inspection at least quarterly
 - b. Wild cervid deterrence (dogs, placement of feed/water away from perimeter, electric fence outside perimeter)
 - c. Sourcing of feed from reliable sources, non-endemic areas for CWD
 - d. Use of disposable equipment and cleaning/disinfection of non-disposable
 - e. No cervid products/by-products brought onto premises
 - f. Use of dedicated equipment (clothing, trailers, feed equipment)
 - g. Rodent control programs
12. Animal Health – General review of herd disease management including vaccinations, parasite control, feed program, body condition scores, etc.

13. Cervid Tagging – Type of tag being used, allows for identification from a distance, colour coding, etc.
14. Identification of calves – Are they identified prior to reaching 12 months of age and submitted to the CFS inventory database?