

Meeting Minutes: Cervid Advisory Task Force

Date: Wednesday, August 15, 2018

Minutes prepared by: Michael Crusan and Samantha Miltz

Location: Buffalo Community Center, Buffalo, Minnesota

Attendance

- Linda Glaser, Board of Animal Health
- Brooks Johnson, Farmed Cervid Producer At Large
- Gary Olson, Minnesota Deer Farmer's Association
- Todd Miller, Minnesota Deer Farmer's Association
- Leo Windschitl, Minnesota Deer Farmer's Association
- Brenda Hartkopf, Minnesota Elk Breeders Association
- Daryl Simon, Non-Native Species Cervid Producer
- Mary Donahue, USDA Veterinary Services
- Don Myren, Board of Animal Health
- Mackenzie Reberg, New Member Board of Animal Health

Non-member Attendance

- Steve Uchtyl, Alternate Minnesota Deer Farmer's Association
- Todd Miller, Alternate Minnesota Deer Farmer's Association
- Chad Nolte, Producer
- Greg Lubinski, Minnesota Elk Breeder's Association
- Kraig Wurst, Minnesota Elk Breeder's Association
- Samantha Miltz, Recorder, Board of Animal Health
- Michael Crusan, Recorder, Board of Animal Health

Members not in Attendance

- Denny Niess, Farmed Cervid hunting premises
- Mark Luedtke, Minnesota Elk Breeder's Association
- Glenn Zebarth, Cervid Veterinarian

Review of Minutes from 06-13-2018

Linda Glaser welcomed the group to the meeting and conducted introductions. She asked the group to comment on the presentation by Scott Wells at the June meeting. The group said the presentation was valuable and said it would be a good idea to work with the legislature to educate people about their industry.

There were no other comments about the minutes from the June meeting and no objections.

Updates from the DNR, USDA and Board of Animal Health

Linda Glaser delivered an update provided to her by the DNR. The DNR wanted the task force to know about its collared deer movement study in southeast Minnesota. The website address for the study is <https://www.dnr.state.mn.us/cwd/deer-movement-study.html>. As of the meeting, the results on the webpage had been last updated July 31, 2018. The group was particularly interested in the movements of a collared doe that ventured approximately 80 miles from the location it was collared.

Dr. Glaser displayed the study website for the group discussion and relayed the next updates from the DNR will likely be after the fall hunting season. She noted the DNR said collared deer should be treated as any other deer during the hunting season. If a collared deer is harvested, the DNR wants the collar back. A member of the task force asked what the DNR planned to do with the data after the study concludes. The website explains the data will be shared with colleagues in other states. They will also use it to improve management strategies to slow the spread of disease in wild deer.

Mary Donahue provided an update from the USDA. She said federal cervid staff reported today that the new program standards are undergoing final review. Speaking specifically about Minnesota, she confirmed her office is in the process of working through drafts of the Winona County CWD herd epidemiological investigation report. Members of the task force asked her about the herd owner's taxidermy operation and if it was mentioned in the report. She confirmed the producer was a taxidermist and discussed the biosecurity of his taxidermy operation and how the producer discarded taxidermy remains. This is considered to be the biggest risk for CWD introduction into the cervid herd on his farm.

Dr. Donahue relayed the codon 96 genotypes for the Winona County CWD positive herd had three of seven animals as GG and four as GS. These animals were genotyped as this testing was included in the depopulation plan associated with indemnity funding by USDA. The positives identified earlier from this herd were not genotyped.

A discussion followed on how to get this information distributed to the public about the risk factor of taxidermy practices in the Winona County herd. Some members requested the Board of Animal Health put out a press release about positive work of the cervid producers in Minnesota. They expressed concern that the Board should be supporting them publically and that no one was spreading the message about taxidermy being a concern for spreading CWD. Part of this discussion also included frustration with the DNR for not enforcing illegal carcass imports and movements into Minnesota.

A member asked the USDA representative, Dr. Donahue, about a Freedom of Information Act Request (FOIA) filed for a copy of the Crow Wing County epidemiological report and why it hadn't been filled. Dr. Donahue said she doesn't handle those requests and the Legislative and Public Affairs office of Animal and Plant Health Inspection Services should be contacted to address the question. She said she would follow up with the USDA contact for the FOIA request and get back to the task force member.

Dr. Glaser provided the Board of Animal Health update and welcomed the Board's new senior veterinarian, Dr. Mackenzie Reberg. Dr. Reberg will oversee the cervid program as part of her duties. Dr. Glaser also mentioned another office assistant will be starting in the cervid program next week to help with records management.

Minnesota Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory ELISA testing inquiry

The Board checked with VDL staff about what it would take to get cervid ELISA testing at the University of Minnesota. Dr. Glaser said their reply included an estimate of \$33,000 in additional equipment needed and an estimated cost of \$25 per 50 samples for a lab testing fee. The VDL director noted that the more samples they tested, the lower the cost per sample.

A member asked if this test were to come to fruition if it would be a recognized result. The group was hopeful this would be the case and would like to see something in the final version of the USDA's CWD program standards.

Another member asked if the USDA's Food Safety and Inspection Service (FSIS) legally requires negative CWD test results before they'll allow a processing plant to process the meat. They also asked if the ELISA test would be approved and acceptable for slaughtering facilities. They mentioned other species are allowed to be processed with pending test results by freezing carcasses or further processing carcasses and holding the packaged meat until results are delivered. FSIS is not requiring plants to test. The requirement for a negative CWD test is an individual processing plant policy.

Exclusionary fencing update

Linda Glaser said part of the goal of this task force is to provide guidance for exclusionary fencing applications in Minnesota. However, the Board has the final approval of all fencing proposals. She handed out a guideline for fencing parameters based on input she collected from experts and other states' rules for cervid enclosures.

The task force did not believe the recommendation for electric wire on the inside of a farmed cervid enclosure was reasonable. Members also asked about government cost share to implement fencing requirements or recommendations. Dr. Glaser said nothing is currently available and members would have to speak with their lawmakers about it. She also said some of these guidelines were difficult to draft because there is not much research or documentation about best practices for exclusionary fencing. Dr. Glaser agreed to consider changes to the electric fencing guidelines she initially issued by removing the requirement of electric fencing on the inside of an enclosure and fewer wires on the outside of the enclosure. She would discuss these changes with staff at the Board and issue a final decision by the end of the week.

In closing, the task force requested the Board distribute meeting agenda and information for the next quarterly meeting of the Minnesota Board of Animal Health.

Next Meeting

Date: Early December 2018

Time: 1 p.m.

Location: TBD

Agenda items: (submit proposed agenda items to Linda Glaser)