



## Meeting Minutes: Farmed Cervid Advisory Task Force

Date: 06-13-2018

Minutes prepared by: Michael Crusan and Samantha Miltz

Location: Minnesota Turkey Growers Association, 108 Marty Drive, Buffalo, MN 55313

### Member Attendance

- Brooks Johnson, Farmed Cervid Producer At Large
- Denny Niess, Farmed Cervid Hunting Preserve
- Gary Olson, Minnesota Deer Farmer's Association
- Leo Windschitl, Minnesota Deer Farmer's Association
- Mark Luedtke, Minnesota Elk Breeders Association
- Brenda Hartkopf, Minnesota Elk Breeders Association
- Daryl Simon, Non-Native Species Cervid Producer
- Mary Donahue, USDA
- Don Myren, Board of Animal Health

### Members not in Attendance

- Dr. Scott Josephson, Cervid Veterinarian
- Dr. Glen Zearth, Cervid Veterinarian
- Dr. Linda Glaser, Board of Animal Health

### Non-member Attendance

- Dr. Beth Thompson, Board of Animal Health
- Michael Crusan, Board of Animal Health
- Jim Byrne, Minnesota Elk Breeders Association
- Steve Uchytel, Minnesota Deer Farmer's Association
- Melissa Uchytel, Minnesota Deer Farmer's Association
- Annie Balghiti, Board of Animal Health
- Scott Wells, University of Minnesota
- Terry Sistad, Board of Animal Health

- Samantha Miltz, Board of Animal Health
- Chad Nolte and family, farmed cervid producer

## Welcome and introductions

Dr. Beth Thompson welcomed everyone to the meeting and introduced Scott Wells from the University of Minnesota after tabletop introductions.

## Review of meeting minutes from 05-02-2018 meeting

Mark Luedtke said at the last meeting he requested a current copy of the Board's cervidae rules. The members didn't receive a copy of those rules yet and would like a copy. They're interested in rules related to cervids and in particular to review endemic area rules. Leo Windschitl made a motion to approve the minutes from the 05-02-2018 meeting and Gary Olson seconded. All approved voting aye.

## Updates from the USDA and BAH

The DNR has declined to continue direct participation in this and subsequent task force meetings. Members expressed concern about how they will be able to keep the conversation open with the DNR after this setback where DNR presence was requested at these meetings and the DNR declined to participate. Mark Luedtke asked what to do if this task force has specific requests for information from the DNR at future meetings. Dr. Thompson said the DNR is still amenable to reviewing the minutes of these meetings and providing written feedback through the Board. Dr. Thompson read an update from the DNR and Dr. Carstensen about the project going on in southeast Minnesota to collar deer and study movement. The DNR has information about this study available on its website [www.mndnr.gov/southeastdeer](http://www.mndnr.gov/southeastdeer). Other states will be sharing this information with Minnesota when the results are published.

The USDA update was presented by Dr. Mary Donahue. She showed a PowerPoint representing the latest federal fiscal year; 13 CWD new cases nationally since 10/1/17; 29 states participate in a herd certification program; 23 states have farmed cervid CWD detections that are participating in the herd certification program. She also reviewed the following topics:

- Policy documents: primary and secondary serological tests.
- New program standards announced on March 28 and closed on March 31.
- Code of Federal Regulations requirements.
- Biosecurity recommendations for cervid farmers.
- Mortality testing.
- Fencing requirements.

Dr. Donahue fielded several questions from the task force. A member asked if the epidemiological report for the Winona County farmed cervid herd would be available soon and what testing had been done in the herd. Dr. Donahue told her it is set to be completed in July and the USDA took their standard samples including soil and

environmental. A follow up question was asked about what the USDA does with the data from those samples after it's collected. Dr. Donahue said it is used internally by the USDA. A member asked if similar samples were collected from the CWD positive farmed cervid herd in Crow Wing County. The answer was yes. Another member asked if the USDA's epidemiological reports present any definitive answers to how CWD infected a farm. Dr. Donahue explained the reports are not meant to provide a specific answer, instead they explore the possible avenues of infection during the investigation. Lastly, a member asked if rectal biopsy would ever be considered a valid CWD test by the USDA. Dr. Donahue said the agency is exploring the validity of those tests.

Dr. Thompson provided the Board update. The proposed legislation to create two task forces for the Board were both vetoed. Board staff are contemplating putting together a group to talk about its current makeup and the industries and voices represented on the Board. She also discussed a reindeer CWD detection in Illinois where a review of the facility showed good inspection records.

## **CWD Risk Assessment Study proposal for farmed cervid producers – Dr. Scott Wells, University of Minnesota**

Dr. Wells presented a PowerPoint with ideas for studies he and his staff could conduct. He wants to reevaluate what we know about CWD and see if anything has changed in the literature. He expressed concern that not enough is known about the transmission routes of the disease. His presentation touched on the following topics:

- How CWD is horizontally transmitted from animal to animal. Indirect contact with prion containing secretions and excretions or environmental contamination.
- The long incubation period of the disease.
- The oral, aerosol, intravenous and environmental exposure risks.
- The brain, blood, saliva, urine and feces by more sensitive methods of transmission.
- Development of CWD cases in farmed cervidae in Minnesota and neighboring states.
- Develop and implement a survey of Minnesota farmed cervidae owners.
- Characterize risks posed by movements of farmed cervidae.
- Develop, implement, and evaluate Farmed Risk Assessment for on farm use to prioritize key biosecurity and prevention practices.

Gary Olson said Minnesota has not found CWD in an imported farmed cervid. Scott pointed out that he doesn't have the data to corroborate that statement and it would need to be evaluated further. He proposes to study what elements of risk exist on the farm. Develop a survey for what we think about the risks and then do a mail survey to get feedback about the use of these practices and what risk they pose.

Denny Niess said there isn't uniformity among states on CWD. He wants to know how to control this disease with so many different states, people, animals, and potential sources. He said there's always risk, and wanted to know the end result if risk is eliminated. Dr. Wells said that is something that needs to be studied.

The group broke into side discussions about educating farmers about how they can reduce risk to their animals through their own biosecurity actions and protocols.

## Fencing information and exclusionary fence proposal

Chad Nolte was a guest of the meeting and is looking at different forms of exclusionary fencing. His family erected 30 acres of fencing last year and six weeks after they finished their fence they were shut down because of the discovery of CWD in the wild white tail deer population, within a 10 mile radius of their property. He wants to get back in business and wants to know what qualifies as an exclusionary fence, and he doesn't want to put up another 8 foot fence because it's not viable. He requested official input from the task force on three proposed fencing options:

1. A 4' woven wire fence built on the inside of his existing 8' fence with a separation of 18" between the fences.
2. A three strand high-tensile electric fence on the outside of the existing fence.
3. Shade cloth adhered to his existing fence.

Before discussing the options a member asked if this task force needed DNR approval to make a decision on exclusionary fencing. The group came to the conclusion that they should field input from the DNR, and do not require specific approval to make a recommendation.

Mr. Nolte gave background information about his proposed herd. He said all the animals at this proposed site are going to be terminal (no animals will come out alive). A whole carcass will not leave the farm. He favors Option 2., an electric fence rated for bulls (cattle).

The group supported Option 2. Denny Niess made a motion to approve a recommendation for three high-tensile electric wires spaced 10 – 12 inches apart between 16 – 44 inches from the ground. Gary Olson seconded. All in favor voting aye. The motion will now be presented to Dr. Linda Glaser to make a decision on the proposed fence.

## Hunt preserves working group discussion

The Hunting Preserve Working Group provided a document for this meeting: Attachment 1 "Conservation Preserves." Brooks Johnson summarized his operation and discussed his desire to adopt separate rules for a "dead end" hunting preserve. He wants to adopt language to run a native deer herd within a fence. If you possess the animals, they must be tagged within a 96 inch fence.

The working group referenced a deer farm that fences in its property and leaves a gate open for the deer to come and go as they please. The owner doesn't tag any of animals because he legally doesn't possess any of them.

The working group's proposal includes where deer are purchased for a preserve and they specified they must come from certified herds. Dr. Thompson interjected with a reminder to the group that this would be something the industry needs to privately bring to their legislators and cannot be carried by the Board.

## Next Meetings

Date: August

Time: TBA

Location: Minnesota Turkey Growers Association

Agenda items: TBA (submit proposed agenda items to Linda Glaser or Samantha Miltz)

The meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.