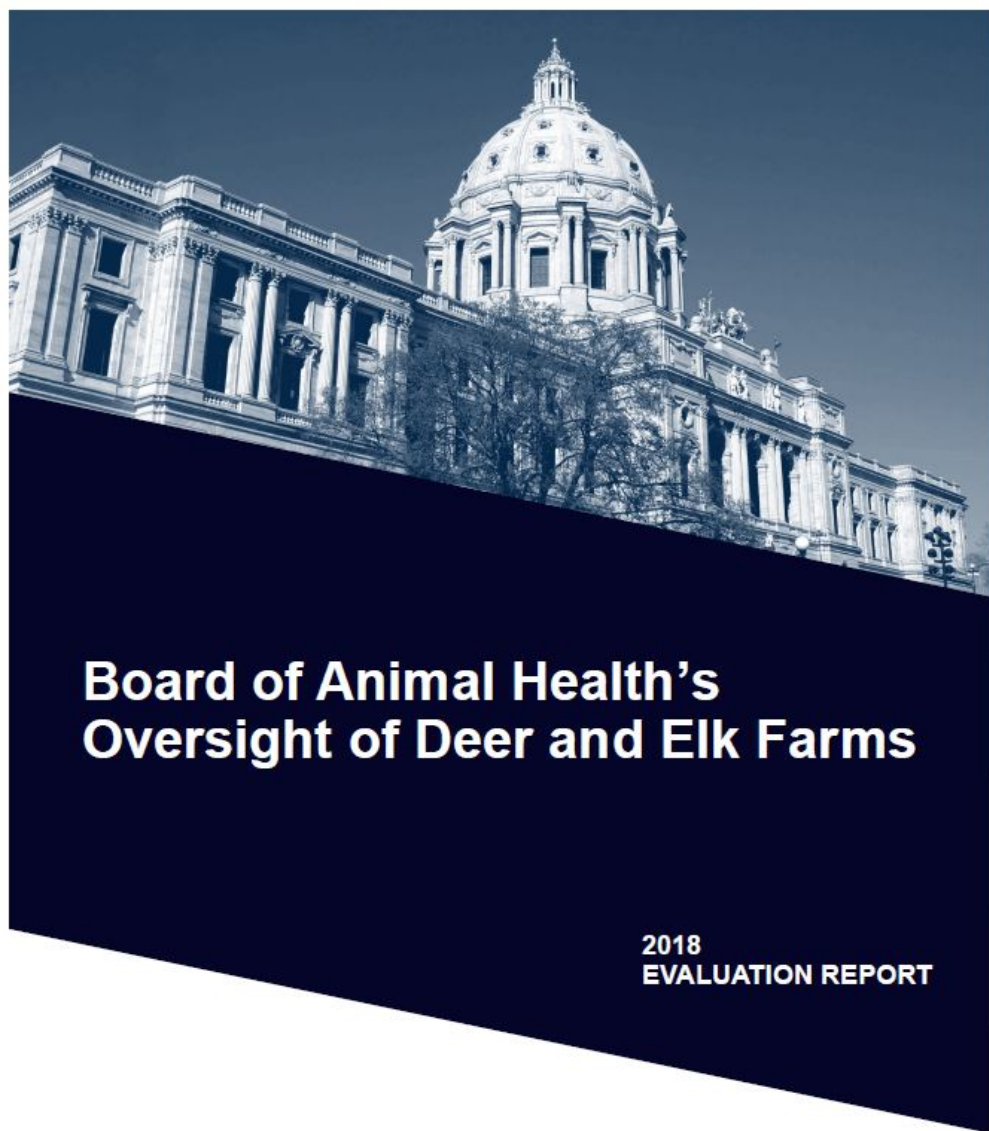




Office of the Legislator Auditor Updates

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OFFICE OF THE LEGISLATIVE AUDITOR
STATE OF MINNESOTA

Summary

Key Facts and Findings:

- The Board of Animal Health (BAH) is responsible for protecting the health of Minnesota's domestic animals, including deer and elk. (p. 3)
- The board has five members, but not one who represents the general public. (pp. 11, 12-13)
- As of April 2018, Minnesota had 398 registered herds, consisting of about 9,300 deer, elk, and other similar species. (p. 4)
- Minnesota law does not require that deer and elk identification tags be read and recorded when completing an animal inventory. (pp. 21-22)
- Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is an always fatal, neurodegenerative disease found in both farmed and wild deer and elk. (p. 6)
- Since 2002, CWD has been identified on eight Minnesota deer and elk farms and in wild deer in two Minnesota counties. (pp. 40-41)
- BAH staff do not systematically analyze whether deer and elk producers submit tissue samples for CWD testing for all deceased animals. (p. 25)
- From 2014 to 2017, about one-third of producers that reported dead deer or elk failed to submit tissues from at least one of those animals for CWD testing. (p. 26)
- BAH has, in some instances, failed to enforce deer and elk regulations. However, the board has improved its deer and elk program over the past several months. (pp. 30-34)
- BAH and the Department of Natural Resources (DNR) have struggled to

appropriately share the information they both require to respond to CWD outbreaks. (p. 47)

- While Minnesota's CWD regulations are among the most rigorous in the nation, there are some areas where other states' policies better protect deer and elk against the disease. (pp. 49-50)

Key Recommendations:

- The Legislature should consider expanding the number of board members and adding at least one member of the general public. (p. 14)
- BAH should clarify expectations of whether and how often producers must verify their herd inventory on an animal-by-animal basis. (pp. 23-24)
- BAH should (1) systematically analyze CWD-testing compliance, and (2) appropriately penalize those producers who fail to submit CWD-testing samples. (p. 27)
- BAH should develop an approval program for deer and elk producers who wish to collect their own CWD test samples. (p. 30)
- BAH should (1) ensure producers follow Minnesota deer and elk laws, (2) strengthen consequences for producers, and (3) monitor field staff performance. (p. 33)
- BAH and DNR should draft a memorandum of understanding outlining each agencies' responsibilities with respect to data sharing. (pp. 47-48)
- The Legislature should convene an advisory task force to evaluate the state's regulations related to deer feeding and live-animal imports. (p. 51)

The Board of Animal Health has failed to enforce some deer and elk regulations.