

TEXAS ANIMAL HEALTH COMMISSION

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR ORDER DECLARING A CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE HIGH RISK AREA CONTAINMENT ZONE FOR PORTIONS OF VAL VERDE COUNTY

Under the provisions of Texas Agriculture Code, §161.061, if the Texas Animal Health Commission (Commission) determines that a disease listed §161.041 exists in a place in this state, the Commission shall establish a quarantine on the affected place. Pursuant to §161.0615, the Commission may quarantine exotic livestock in all or any part of this state as a means of immediately restricting movement of animals potentially infected with disease and shall clearly describe the territory included in a quarantine area. The Commission by rule may delegate its quarantine authority to the Executive Director of the Texas Animal Health Commission.

Under the provisions of 4 TAC §40.7, the Executive Director may issue an order to declare a Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) high risk area or county based on sound epidemiological principles for disease detection, control, and eradication.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a fatal neurodegenerative disorder that affects some cervid species, including white-tailed deer, mule deer, North American elk or wapiti (*Cervus Canadensis*), red deer (*Cervus elaphus*), Sika deer (*Cervus Nippon*), moose (*Alces alces*), and any associated subspecies and hybrids. CWD is known to be a communicable disease transmitted directly to susceptible species (through animal to animal contact) and indirectly (through environmental contamination).

Elk, red deer, sika deer, moose and their associated subspecies and hybrids (hereinafter referred to as non-native CWD susceptible species) are subject to regulation by the Commission as exotic livestock as provided by various provisions in Chapter 161.

The Executive Director finds that the recent detection of CWD infection in a free-ranging white-tailed deer (disease presence) in Val Verde County creates a high probability for susceptible species in portions of the county having, developing or being exposed to CWD.

The Executive Director further finds that the risk of disease exposure from the unnatural movement of non-native CWD susceptible species and carcass parts from these species located in portions of Val Verde County could lead to disease exposure across the state.

The Executive Director hereby DECLARES that portion of the state lying within the boundaries of a line beginning in Val Verde County at the International Bridge and proceeding northeast along Spur 239 to U.S. 90; thence north along U.S. 90 to the intersection of U.S. 277/377, thence north along U.S. 277/377 to the U.S. 277/377 bridge at Lake Amistad (29.496183°, -100.913355°), thence west along the southern shoreline of Lake Amistad to International boundary at Lake Amistad dam, thence south along the Rio Grande River to the International Bridge on Spur 239 to be a CWD High Risk Area Containment Zone (hereinafter referred to as Val Verde County Containment Zone or CZ).

The Executive Director hereby QUARANTINES the above referenced Val Verde County Containment Zone, and:

1. Prohibits a person from moving live non-native CWD susceptible species from the CZ.
2. Prohibits a person from releasing a non-native CWD susceptible species within the CZ unless the animal is released within a high fence premises and identified in accordance with 4 TAC §40.6(c)(7).
3. Requires a person that hunter harvests a non-native CWD susceptible species that is 16 months of age or older within the CZ to have the animal CWD tested by a state or federal animal health official, an accredited veterinarian, or a Certified CWD Postmortem Sample Collector, or moved directly to a Texas Parks and Wildlife Check Station in Val Verde County for CWD testing within 48 hours of harvest. The test results shall be provided to the Commission within 30 days of receiving the test results.
4. Prohibits a person from moving a non-native CWD susceptible species carcass, or carcass parts, from the CZ unless:
 - a. CWD tested by a state or federal animal health official, an accredited veterinarian, or a Certified CWD Postmortem Sample Collector, or
 - b. Moved directly to a Texas Parks and Wildlife Check Station in Val Verde County for CWD testing within 48 hours of harvest, and
 - c. Meets the requirements of 4 TAC §40.6(e) related to carcass movement restrictions.

This order is issued pursuant to §§161.041, 161.061 and 161.0615 of the Texas Agriculture Code and 4 TAC §40.7 and is effective immediately, and authorizes publication of a Notice of the Chronic Wasting Disease High Risk Area Containment Zone for Portions of Val Verde County in the Del Rio News Herald.

This order shall remain in effect pending further epidemiological assessment by the Texas Animal Health Commission.

Signed this the 20th day of December, 2019.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Andy Schwartz".

Andy Schwartz, D.V.M.
Executive Director
Texas Animal Health Commission