

CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE HERD CERTIFICATION PROGRAM

The Texas Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Herd Certification Program (HCP) is a cooperative effort between the Texas Animal Health Commission (TAHC), the United States Department of Agriculture-Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (USDA), and farmed cervid producers. The TAHC coordinates the Texas program and encourages cervid producers to certify their herds and comply with the CWD Herd Certification Program Standards. The goal of the HCP is to provide a consistent, national approach to control the incidence of CWD in farmed cervids and prevent the interstate and intrastate spread of CWD. This compliance guide is provided to assist you in ensuring your herd meets all HCP requirements.

Stay Informed of HCP Requirements

Owners of enrolled herds are required to comply with all TAHC and USDA requirements related to the Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program. As these requirements may change, the TAHC encourages you to review the following resources regularly to ensure you stay informed:

USDA Requirements:

- Title 9 Code of Federal Regulation Part 55 Subpart B, Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-9/chapter-I/subchapter-B/part-55>
- Title 9 Code of Federal Regulation Part 81, Chronic Wasting Disease in Deer, Elk and Moose: <https://www.ecfr.gov/current/title-9/chapter-I/subchapter-C/part-81?toc=1>
- Chronic Wasting Disease Program Standards: <https://www.aphis.usda.gov/aphis/ourfocus/animalhealth/animal-disease-information/cervid/cervids-cwd/cervids-voluntary-hcp>

TAHC Requirements:

- Title 4 Texas Administrative Code (TAC) Chapter 40: [https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac\\$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=4&pt=2&ch=40&rl=Y](https://texreg.sos.state.tx.us/public/readtac$ext.ViewTAC?tac_view=4&ti=4&pt=2&ch=40&rl=Y)

HCP Inspections for Enrolled Herds

Enrolled herds and facilities must be inspected for compliance with 4 TAC §40.3. A non-exhaustive list of compliance inspection points are included below to help ensure you are prepared for your next inspection.

1. The inspection of a cervid breeding facility was conducted by a TAHC representative or a TAHC Authorized Veterinarian 11 to 13 months after the last inspection.
2. The herd was visually observed for clinical signs of CWD.
3. All animals had official identification and one other form of unique identification, as required by TAHC rules.
4. Records were complete and accurate.
5. TAHC was notified of all farmed or captive cervids that escaped or disappeared and all free-ranging cervids that entered the facility as required by TAHC rules.
6. The previous year's inventory and all documented dispositions and acquisitions were reconciled.
7. TAHC was notified of lower status additions within five business days of the acquisition.



8. The herd owner’s records were reviewed and reconciled with the overall head count.
9. During annual inspections, one identification was visually verified on at least 50% of the animals.
10. During physical inspections, two forms of identification were visually verified on 100% of the animals.
11. All animals 12 months of age or older that died were tested for CWD.
12. The obex and both retropharyngeal lymph nodes were submitted to the laboratory for each eligible mortality.
13. CWD test samples were submitted to an approved laboratory with seven days of collection.
14. The number of samples submitted met the minimum mortality rate (5% for WTD 12 months of age and older averaged over a three-year period).
15. Perimeter fencing was adequate to prevent ingress and/or egress of cervids. For herds established after October 15, 2021, the fence was a minimum of eight feet high.

Penalties Associated with Noncompliance

Penalties for failing to comply with the HCP requirements vary depending on the severity of the issue and can include a warning letter, suspension, reduction, or revocation of herd status. Common HCP noncompliance issues noted by USDA include missed test samples, poor-quality test samples, and untimely sample submission. The consequence of missed and poor-quality test samples is described in more detail in the Consequence of Missed and Poor-Quality Test Samples section of this document.

Consequence of Missed and Poor-Quality Test Samples

Surveillance of all animal mortalities in a herd is the key to increasing confidence that HCP-certified herds are at a lower risk for CWD infection. Poor quality samples and missing samples undermine the TAHC’s and USDA’s ability to assess the CWD status of a herd. Poor quality samples include samples that are severely autolyzed, from the wrong portion of the brain, the wrong tissue, or not testable for other reasons. Missing samples occur when any animal 12 months of age or older dies, is harvested, slaughtered, escapes, or is otherwise lost and samples are not submitted for CWD diagnostic testing. If neither the obex nor the retropharyngeal lymph node in a test-eligible animal can be tested due to being missed or of poor quality, then consequences may include, but are not limited to:

1. A reduction in herd status; or
2. A suspension of herd status; or
3. At the cervid producer’s discretion and approval of TAHC and USDA, the option to replace missed or poor-quality samples with postmortem samples (1 to 1) from animals in the herd that are mutually selected by TAHC, USDA and the cervid producer, or
4. At the cervid producer’s discretion and approval of TAHC and USDA, the option to replace missed or poor-quality samples from white-tailed deer with antemortem samples (5 to 1) from white-tailed deer in the herd that are mutually selected by TAHC, USDA and the cervid producer.

Questions

For questions related to the CWD HCP, contact the TAHC Region Office in your area.

To receive animal agriculture updates directly to your inbox, sign up to be a TAHC Insider, <https://bit.ly/3fC5KNY>.

Amarillo.....	806-354-9335
Beeville.....	361-358-3234
Giddings	979-212-5440
Laredo.....	956-568-5741
Stephenville.....	512-556-6277
Sulphur Springs.....	903-919-3748

