

Chronic Wasting Disease Carcass Disposal Plan in Pennsylvania

Huang S. Lin, Ph.D.
Division of Hazardous Waste Management
Bureau of Waste Management
Department of Environmental Protection
Harrisburg, PA 17105
hlin@state.pa.us

The Pennsylvania deer population of road-kill and hunter harvest is estimated at approximately 45,000 road kills and 400,000 hunter harvest.

Since CWD was identified in Colorado in 1967, this disease has been identified in 14 states and two provinces in Canada. In 2005, both northern and southern adjacent state of New York and West Virginia, CWD were identified in domestic and wild deer. Immediately, the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) classified PA as a Tier 2 CWD state.

The PA Animal Health System, PA CWD surveillance, to date has tested nearly ten thousand of white-tailed deer and 162 elk with no positive results.

PA Governor, Ed Rendell authorized a multi-agency response plan in coordination with the USDA to strengthen the CWD surveillance and monitoring system. This includes the requirement for a cervids certificate for imports and bans transport of high-risk body parts from other states. Protecting the health of PA's animals maintains the family gathering-hunting tradition and annual \$4.8 billion in PA hunting related industries.

Once the CWD deer has been identified, PA will eradicate as many deer as possible for CWD testing within a five mile radius to prevent wide spread of the disease. The massive deer killing will generate large quantities of deer carcass. The animal disposal is crucial to CWD planning. PA evaluated various carcass disposal methods. During the disease outbreak, carcasses identified as positive for CWD will be disposed of by alkaline digester or in the PA State Animal Diagnostic Laboratories incinerator.

The deer carcasses that tested negative for CWD, will either be buried in Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) permitted double composite lined landfills. The waste to energy incinerator was also evaluated for disinfection effectiveness.

The landfill locations and contact information are posted on PA DEP's website. The interim guidelines of proper deer disposal in landfills are available from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (US EPA).