

Notice



Game Animal Council
NEW ZEALAND

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)

CWD is a fatal neurodegenerative disease of both farmed and wild deer. It occurs in most species of deer, although Fallow deer have not become infected from natural exposure.

CWD was spread from the USA to Canada, and from Canada to the Republic of Korea, in the early 1990's through the movement of infected farmed deer. In both the USA and Canada the disease has escaped into wild populations and has spread widely. CWD is currently present in the USA, Canada, South Korea and Norway with one infected moose being found in Finland.

The major routes for CWD transmission are exchange of saliva between live deer and ingestion of soil contaminated by an infected carcass. Most deer tissues from CWD-infected deer, including urine and blood, have been shown to carry the infected protein.

CWD is always fatal, but infected deer take 18-24 months to exhibit signs of infection. That means, hunters cannot tell if a deer has CWD by inspecting it. Body fluids, body parts, and infected soil (where it can remain for 20 years) can all transmit CWD, as can hunting equipment such as knives and clothing. CWD is highly resistant to disinfection. In short, if CWD were to arrive in New Zealand we would be extremely unlikely to get rid of it.

Likely entry pathways

CWD occurs in overseas regions that are popular with hikers, skiers, anglers and hunters. The CWD prion protein is capable of surviving disinfection. This means there is a risk of CWD being accidentally introduced to New Zealand on outdoor or hunting gear that has been used overseas. It is important that dirt is removed from visiting hunters' gear, outdoor clothing, and footwear into waste bins that will not be emptied onto land used for deer farming or hunting. Visitors will not be aware of the risks.

A significant risk of accidental introduction of CWD to New Zealand is from the illegal importation of contaminated deer products such as urine-based

hunting lures (illegal here, but used legitimately overseas) or green (untreated) hides or trophies.

The following specific guidelines assist particular groups who pose high risks.

Hunting guides

If CWD gets in through your clients' use of contaminated gear, your guiding career will be over. When hired by people from CWD-endemic areas, advise them to clean their gear before flying here. Discourage clients from CWD-endemic areas from bringing their own hunting gear, on the basis that getting it in will be both a hassle and poses a risk of introducing diseases. Make recommendations on where clients can hire or buy hunting gear in New Zealand. When meeting clients who have hunted in CWD-infected areas, inspect their gear and make sure it is clean before you set off. Don't let ANY client use urine-based lures. Urine-based lures are illegal in New Zealand - let MPI know through the biosecurity hotline (0800 80 99 66) if you spot any.

Hunters from CWD-endemic areas visiting NZ

It will be a hassle getting your gear through the border; it is far preferable to arrange your hunting trip through a professional guide or a game/trophy operation and use their gear. If you do bring hunting gear, you must declare it and your hunting intentions on your passenger arrival card. New Zealand border biosecurity inspections are extremely thorough. Make sure you clean all your gear before departing for New Zealand to avoid lengthy delays at the airport on arrival.

New Zealanders going hunting in CWD-endemic areas

Save yourself hassles at immigration where you are going, and on arrival back in New Zealand, by not taking your own gear. Use what the tour operator provides. If you must take gear, clean it thoroughly before your return to New Zealand and ALWAYS declare that you have been hunting on your New Zealand arrival card.

For further information on precautions to take when hunting in CWD endemic areas go to <http://cwd-info.org/>.