

## Enacting Baiting & Feeding Bans in Response to CWD Detections

### Frequently Asked Questions

#### What is CWD?

- Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) is a fatal, infectious nervous system disease of deer, moose and elk. It belongs to the family of diseases known as transmissible spongiform encephalopathies (TSEs) or prion diseases. CWD occurs only in members of the cervid or deer family - both wild and captive.

#### How is CWD transmitted?

- Recent studies indicate that CWD prions exist in the saliva, urine and feces of infected deer. CWD prions can persist in the environment and remain infectious for many years.

#### Why are counties included in the baiting and feeding ban?

- Under state statute 29.336, Wis. Stats, the Wisconsin Department of Natural Resources is required to enact a ban on the baiting and feeding ***of deer*** in any county within 10 miles of a captive or free-roaming deer that tests positive for either CWD or Bovine Tuberculosis (Tb).
- In August 2017, an Act signed into law to amend current state statute did the following:
  - remove deer baiting and feeding prohibitions in counties where 36 months have passed since any confirmed positive test for chronic wasting disease or bovine tuberculosis (Tb) within the county; and
  - remove deer baiting and feeding prohibitions in adjacent counties where 24 months have passed since any confirmed positive test for chronic wasting disease or bovine tuberculosis (Tb) within a 10-mile radius of the county.
- The 24/36-month period would start over again with each new positive test result as they are confirmed.
- Please check the WI DNR baiting and feeding webpage frequently for updates, as new baiting and feeding bans may be enacted.
- When CWD is first detected and bans are enacted, counties are designated as being “CWD affected.” There are currently 43 CWD affected counties in the state.

**Why are bans enacted when infected animals are found behind a fence on a deer farm?**

- Disease transmission may occur through a captive deer facility fence, between captive deer and wild deer through nose-to-nose contact. Recent studies indicate that CWD prions exist in saliva of infected deer.
- The possibility of risk of captive deer escapes that are infected also exists, as does disease transmission via corresponding interaction with the local wild deer herd. An escaped captive deer may or may not be ear-tagged.

**What is considered bait?**

- Bait is any material that is placed or used to attract wild animals for hunting purposes - including scent materials, salt, minerals, grains, etc.
- Water is not considered bait.

**What is considered feed?**

- Feed is any material used to feed or attract wild animals for non-hunting purposes, including recreational and supplemental feeding, except as allowed for birds and small mammals.

**Why is banning baiting & feeding of deer important in responding to CWD?**

- The primary intended goals of the ban include protecting the local wild deer herd and reducing the spread of disease. The effects of baiting and feeding include artificially increased and sustained natural populations beyond carrying capacity and altered deer behavior.
- Bait and feed placed on the landscape, even in limited quantities, often attracts unnatural numbers of deer. Deer are often concentrated at one bait or feed site, or between several sites in close proximity – this allows for increased contact that would otherwise not occur in natural feeding environments. Both direct contact (deer to a potentially contaminated deer) and indirect contact (deer to a potentially contaminated environment) increases as a result of baiting and feeding.
- Unnatural concentrations of deer and contact rates caused by baiting and feeding increase the risk of disease infection and transmission.
- Baiting and feeding deer can change behavior patterns, drawing deer away from natural feeding and bedding locations where they may create traffic hazards. Feeding can also increase habituation to humans. High concentrations of deer due to feeding can slow down forest regeneration, cause crop damage, and impact local vegetation and increase contact among different wildlife species causing increased competition and stress among deer and other species using the feed site.

### **How are food plots different from baiting & feeding of deer?**

- Bait & feed are different than food plots because artificial feed/bait is continually replaced when baiting or feeding. Food plots also typically cover a much larger area where the food source is more spread out and once consumed, it is not replaced over and over again.

### **What science supports enacting baiting and feeding bans to protect the health of Wisconsin's wild deer herd?**

- Peer-reviewed scientific publications reinforce the prudence of enacting baiting and feeding bans in order to protect the local wild deer herd
- There are numerous Midwestern and western studies supporting the increased risks of disease transmission in areas of baiting and feeding
- Research suggests there is strong scientific evidence that CWD-positive deer can shed infectious material into the environment, and that disease can be transmitted through contact with contaminated materials, including soil. These studies provide evidence that CWD prions, when shed into the environment, pose a significant, persistent risk to other deer.

### **Does the ban prohibit feeding birds and small mammals?**

- Material may be placed solely for the purpose of attracting and feeding wild birds and small mammals if:
  - placed in bird feeding devices and structures at a sufficient height or design to prevent access by ***deer***;
  - the structures and devices are within 50 yards of a dwelling devoted to human occupancy; and
  - when deer, bear, or elk are found to be utilizing bird feeding devices or structures the devices or structures shall be enclosed or elevated higher to prevent access by deer (**Note:** The placement of plain water for drinking or for birdbaths is allowed).

### **In areas where deer baiting is not allowed, what can I use to attract deer closer to my stand?**

- Use of the following is legal statewide:
  - decoys;
  - scents;
  - naturally occurring material (e.g., acorns) that is deposited by natural vegetation and is not collected and/or relocated in any manner;
  - crops planted and left standing as wildlife food plots; and
  - material deposited solely as a result of normal agricultural or gardening practices and is not collected and/or relocated for hunting or other purposes.

**What is considered a scent material?**

- Scent is any material, except animal parts or by-products, used to attract wild animals solely by its odor.

**Are there any restrictions on scent material?**

- The following rules apply statewide:
  - up to two ounces of liquid or solid scent may be placed or used in any manner (e.g., on the ground, scrapes, branches, etc.);
  - any scent material over two ounces must be inaccessible to deer and must be removed daily at the end of deer hunting hours; and
  - honey and solid animal parts or animal by-products may not be used as scent.

**Is the selling of bait & feed also banned?**

- The bans do not apply to the selling of bait and feed.

**Do the bans apply to tribal members?**

- The baiting and feeding ban does not apply to Chippewa tribal members exercising off-reservation treaty rights within the Ceded Territory or on tribal reservations. It also does not apply to other Wisconsin Tribes within their tribally-owned lands.
- The U.S. District Court ruling to allow night hunting of white-tailed deer within the Ceded Territory by Chippewa tribal members does allow the use of bait anywhere within their safe zone of fire.
- Baiting by Chippewa tribal members is allowed in areas where baiting is banned within the Ceded Territory, unless the members' tribe has enacted a baiting ban on its members.

**What is the fine for baiting or feeding deer in a banned county?**

- Subjects contacted in violation could be issued civil forfeitures (up to \$2,152) and possible revocation of license (loss of hunting privileges). With newly enacted bans, Conservation Wardens use an educational approach to inform citizens.