



JB Pritzker, Governor • Jerry Costello II, Director

Bureau of Animal Health and Welfare

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Cervid Producers of Illinois,

We are writing to inform you of the 2024 cooperative agreements awarded to the Illinois Department of Agriculture from the USDA APHIS under the Farmed Cervid Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Management and Response Activities. The funds award to the Department will be used for the following three initiatives:

1) CWD Tissue Sampling Class

- Similar to last year, we received a cooperative agreement that will fund additional CWD tissue sampling certification courses. These courses will provide cervid producers and USDA category II accredited veterinarians with vital training to ensure effective and accurate CWD tissue sampling techniques. All attendees will receive supplies needed to properly collect CWD samples. Additionally, cervid producers will receive prepaid shipping labels, shipping kits and submission to the University of Illinois Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory at no cost.

2) Predictive Genetics

- A new funding opportunity for this year includes covering NADR's submission costs associated with testing the genomically estimated breeding value (GEBV) of white-tailed deer. A GEBV is a score assigned to individual white-tailed deer and estimates the total genetic potential of that animal's susceptibility to CWD. The goal of using predictive genetics is to create herds less susceptible to CWD by removing poor scoring animals and introducing improved genetics with selective breeding.
- While NADR is working on including all species, this test is *only* validated for white-tailed deer therefore this option is currently only available for white-tailed deer herds.
- There will be an application process for white-tailed deer producers interested in this option as only those in good standing with the CWD program will be granted funds.

3) Farmed Cervid Online Portal

- Another new funding opportunity for this year's grant includes the creation of an online portal specific to cervid producers. This portal will serve as an educational hub to offer resources, information, and guidance on federal and state rules and regulations specific to farmed cervids. For those that are certified in the CWD tissue sampling class and need the online quiz renewal option for their recertification at the 5-year mark, this portal will also serve as the platform for that.

We will be providing more detailed information on each of these funding opportunities in the coming weeks. We appreciate your continued commitment to cervid health and look forward to working together again this year to implement these new resources.

Sincerely,

Illinois Department of Agriculture
Bureau of Animal Health and Welfare