

# For Health Professionals

## Health Alerts

### **Health Alert Advisory #131 - Confirmed Chronic Wasting Disease In NYS - April 1, 2005**

The Dept. of Agriculture and Markets, in consultation with the NYSDEC, NYSDOH, and USDA APHIS, has just released a press announcement about the first positive findings of chronic wasting disease (CWD) in a captive deer in Oneida County.

The entire press release can be found at:

<http://www.agmkt.state.ny.us/AD/release.asp?ReleaseID=1420>.

This is the first confirmation of CWD east of Illinois. Because this is a disease limited to deer and elk, Ag & Mkts will be managing the investigation of the disease in captive herds, and NYSDEC will be managing the investigation in wild deer. There is no evidence to date that humans have a risk of acquiring CWD. However, because CWD is caused by a prion, and variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease in humans is also caused by exposure to prions from cows with mad cow disease (bovine spongiform encephalopathy, BSE) there may be human health questions. The NYSDOH Zoonoses Program has established a toll-free 24-hour CWD Hotline that will be managed by trained operators. The number is 1-800-808-1987.

Important note: Any persons reporting contact with a sick deer or elk will need to be referred to the Erie County Department of Health (ECDOH) at (716) 858-7697 (Monday - Friday, 8:30 AM - 4:30 PM) or (716) 898-4225 (Evenings, Weekends, and Holidays). The ECDOH will handle the situation as a potential rabies exposure and work to have the animal humanely euthanized, submitted through routine channels to the Wadsworth Center Rabies Laboratory for testing, and subsequent CWD testing will occur at Cornell.

The NYSDOH CWD fact sheet has been updated and attached for your reference. Please distribute this information as needed to anyone with questions. If you have any additional questions, please feel free to contact the NYSODH Zoonoses Program at 518-474-3186.