

Meat Processor Deer/Venison Processing Recommendations to Minimize the Spread of Chronic Wasting Disease



✓ Wear rubber or latex gloves when accepting and handling deer and venison. Change gloves between different animals/carcasses.

Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) has not been found to have a link to variant Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (vCJD) in humans, but the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend not consuming venison from infected deer. Minimizing risk and limiting human exposure to CWD prions should be considered a best management practice.

✓ Isolate and do not cut or process the carcass or meat products that have been tested for CWD until negative results are obtained.

✓ Process carcasses individually and avoid mixing meat from multiple carcasses into ground meat products if venison is from a zone where CWD has been found and keep it whole muscle.

✓ Do not cut through brain, spinal cord, lymph nodes or spleen; CWD prions accumulate here.

- Bone out muscles along the backbone and avoid cutting through the spinal column.
- Do not cut through lymph nodes when possible and remove them from trim when found.
- Minimize the handling of higher risk tissues such as the brain, eyes, spinal cord, and lymphatic tissue.

✓ Use single-use, non-porous trash bags to line barrels. Double line trash bags for carcass waste from free ranging deer harvested in CWD affected areas which include Clinton, Dickinson, Eaton, Gratiot, Ingham, Ionia, Jackson, Kent and Montcalm counties (Note 2021 Deer Hunting Regulations include carcass movement restrictions in the following areas--Montcalm County in its entirety; Otisco, Orleans, Ronald and North Plains Township in Ionia County and Nelson, Spencer, Courtland, Oakfield, Grattan, and Cannon Townships in Kent County).

✓ Remove and dispose of solids (including meat and bone pieces) before wet cleaning the processing area to avoid sending infectious material through drains.

✓ Waste created from the processing of a carcass from CWD affected areas should be bagged and placed in dumpsters or receptacles to be sent directly to a regulated landfill.

- Do not render, burn, compost, or place in the environment parts from deer that potentially have CWD as this could contaminate the environment or soil and spread the disease.

✓ Cleaning and sanitizing are best practices to minimize the spread of infectious CWD material. Infectious prions are only inactivated through heat at 1800°F, not typical processing steps.

- Regularly clean and sanitize personal protective equipment (boots, gloves, clothing, etc.).

- Keep equipment, including knives, moist between use (exposure) and cleaning/decontamination.
- Use 50% food grade commercial bleach, 50% water sanitizing solution and soak processing equipment and surfaces for at least 1 hour.
- Rinse all equipment and surfaces with hot, potable water after soaking in bleach solution.

- ✓ Always clean and sanitize between processing wild game and meat/poultry products.
- ✓ Consider using separate knives and equipment for venison processing and meat/poultry.
- ✓ See additional intake recommendations, including segregation of suspect CWD wild game.