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**The Department of Livestock Reports Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD)
Detection in Flathead County Game Farm**

Helena, Mont.—On November 19 the Montana Department of Livestock received notification that a single game farm animal in Flathead County was confirmed positive for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). This is the second detection of CWD in domestic cervids in Montana this year.

The CWD positive animal was found as a result of mandatory surveillance of all age eligible animal mortalities in game farm animals in Montana. Montana's CWD Herd Certification Program requires all animals greater than 12 months of age to be tested. The CWD positive animal was not exhibiting any clinical signs of CWD but was found dead on the affected premises. The infection was confirmed by the National Veterinary Services Laboratories in Ames, Iowa through the identification of the prion in tissue samples collected from the animal.

The Department has placed the herd under quarantine and is conducting an epidemiological investigation. Montana law requires CWD positive game farm herds to undergo complete depopulation and post-mortem testing of the herd, or quarantine of the entire herd for a period of five years from the last CWD positive case.

State Veterinarian Dr. Marty Zaluski stated, "An epidemiologic investigation will be conducted, but at this time, the source of the disease is unknown." Zaluski added, "We will look at historical animal movements associated with this captive herd and proximity to infected wildlife to try to determine the source of exposure."

Montana Fish Wildlife and Parks (FWP) has documented CWD in wild cervids across much of Montana through surveillance that began in 2017. In 2019, approximately 7,000 wild deer, elk, and moose were sampled statewide, with 140 of them testing positive for CWD.

CWD is a progressive, fatal disease that affects the nervous system of white-tailed deer, mule deer, elk, and moose. Transmission can occur through direct contact between animals, through

urine, feces, saliva, blood and antler velvet. Infected carcasses may serve as a source of environmental contamination and can infect other animals. Infected animals may carry the disease for years without showing signs of illness, but in later stages, signs may include progressive weight loss, lack of coordination and physical debilitation.

There is no known transmission of CWD to humans. However, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends that hunters harvesting an animal in areas known for the presence of CWD, have their animal tested. If the animal tests positive, the CDC advises against eating the meat.

The mission of the Montana Department of Livestock is to control and eradicate animal diseases, prevent the transmission of animal diseases to humans, and to protect the livestock industry from theft and predatory animals. For more information on the Montana Department of Livestock, visit www.liv.mt.gov.

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