

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Excerpted in part from the 2008 analysis “*No Accident*”)

**RE: The continuing spread of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD),
and the failures of our governments regarding its causes**

The Lethbridge Fish and Game Association and the Alberta Wilderness Association call on all federal leaders to implement the recommendations of the comprehensive analysis “*No Accident, Public Policy and Chronic Wasting Disease in Canada.*”

The Problem

Public policy pushed through two decades ago to enable the privatization, domestication, and commercialization of wildlife continues to gravely imperil public wildlife and wildlife economies; it threatens traditional agriculture, and represents a significant risk to public health. Yet even after repeated epidemics of lethal diseases, the accruing of massive deficits, and the realization of dire prospects going forward, our federal and provincial governments remain fixated on symptoms rather than the cause.

As predicted by leading scientists, game farming has resulted in the fostering and spread of deadly pathogens such as Bovine Tuberculosis and Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD), a fatal Transmissible Spongiform Encephalopathy (cervid version of ‘mad cow’) that has spread from game farms to wild deer and elk in Canada. Yet not only has there not been a revisiting of the deeply flawed policy that created and continues to exacerbate the crises, official protocol is focused on destroying mostly-healthy, public wildlife in areas where the disease emerges—while allowing or even encouraging continued human transfer of the disease.

Key Recommendations

- An immediate moratorium on the movement of all potentially infected tissue, living or dead. The ban must apply to all animals, carcasses, tissues, products, (including velvet and urine) and all potentially infected equipment.
- A leadership role to be assumed by the Government of Canada to work with the provinces to undertake immediate comprehensive assessment and review. Analysis must include, at the most fundamental policy levels, questions and potentially wholesale revisions of the very notion of privatizing, domesticating, and commercializing wildlife.
- The process must encourage open, honest, and unencumbered input from all appropriate and affected interests. Testimony must be encouraged; it must not be restricted, coerced, or secured under duress. Scientists, public servants, and private interests must be protected.

- Completion of a comprehensive National CWD Containment or Eradication Strategy—with an accompanying budget remains an extreme urgency: the strategy must be announced, funded, and completed as soon as possible.
- Accountability demands acknowledgment of the policy and regulatory failures responsible for the introduction of CWD—all costs must accrue accordingly.
- Review must detail all prudent and required measures for effective containment, eradication, and the restoration of the affected ecosystems. Fairness and deterrence demand ongoing budget and policy accountability.

For information call:

Rick Blakeley, President LFGA — (403) 308-3541

Brian Dingreville, LFGA — (403) 315-5887

Madeline Wilson, Conservation Specialist, AWA — (403) 283-2025