

On behalf of the WV Deer Farmers Association, I would like to thank this joint committee, the WVU Extension Service, the Dept. of Agriculture., the Dept of Natural Resources, and all others that are participating in this study.

Cervid Farming can bring a great amount of jobs and revenue to West Virginia. It is a rapidly growing industry across the United States.

There are many markets for the sale of Venison such as:

- Breeding stock and Semen
- Hunting stock for Hunting Ranches
- Leather from hides to make gloves and other clothing
- Antlers for chandeliers, lamps, jewelry, knife handles, buttons for clothing
- Internal parts such as liver and heart can be sold to dog food companies
- There is a good market for Antler velvet which is used as a chondroitin for arthritis. It has taken the place of Viox, which has been taken off the market by the F.D.A.
- Then there is a market for Venison. Venison sells more per pound than beef. Other venison products such as Jerky, summer sausage, or just choice cuts for grilling or cooking.
- Deer urine for hunters - one deer produces 64 oz. of urine a day. Deer urine sells retail - for \$4.00 to \$13.00 an oz. that could bring in \$256.00 to \$832.00 a day per deer. A lot of hunters depend on deer farms to furnish this product.

For years, we have sought to be under the control of the Dept. of Agriculture for many reasons – some examples are:

- Dept. of Ag in WV is responsible for the food chain in the state. They understand what it takes to produce a safe and healthy product to be sold and consumed in WV.
- Dept. of Ag has an epidemiologist and a certified Vet on staff when needed. There is a BIG difference between caring for wildlife in their natural habitat and raising livestock on the farm. The Dept. of Ag is the most qualified when it comes to farming any animal behind a fence,

where as the DNR is qualified to regulate wild life in a free range environment.

The scope of Chapter 20 was made for the DNR to protect the people and preserve the natural resources of WV.

The scope of Chapter 19 was made for the Dept. of Ag to protect the people and promote and preserve the farming industry in WV.

One of the problems we are having is the over lapping of regulatory authority. Since the introduction of CSR58/64 in 2006, the DNR now regulates non-native species such as fallow deer, red deer, munt jacs, axis deer, sika deer, peredavid deer, reindeer, and horses. Chapter 20, section 4 - Equestrian Activities Responsibility Act has somehow ended up in the code that deals with wildlife. It seems to me horses are not wildlife in WV.

With my cervids, I control the genetics, health care, diet, and the marketing of these animals. I pay \$250 a year for a cervid license that entitles me to propagate my cervids for commercial purposes. But then I am told by the DNR that I do not own my deer and by law it is illegal to sell my venison in WV. However, that Stonewall Jackson Resort and the Greenbrier can import venison from New Zealand to sell. Also, the DNR pays \$1.45 a pound processing fee for venison donated by Hunters Helping the Hungry Program. I would like to point out there is no safe guard for contaminated meat in this program. We as deer farmers are denied the opportunity of taking our farm raised whitetail deer to a USDA slaughter facility for slaughter and sale. Hogs, turkeys, ducks, rabbits, bison, elk, horses and were once wildlife, they are now livestock. And now the USDA considers farm raised whitetail deer livestock.

When you read CSR58/64, you can clearly see the rules go one from starting a cervid farming operation.

Here are just two sections I would like to point out:

**7.4.32** Should any animal test positive for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) within the captive Cervid facility, the facility shall be immediately quarantined and the captive herd shall be immediately depopulated under guidelines established collaboratively by the DNR, USDA, and WV Dept of Agriculture. Epidemiological investigations shall be conducted to identify any captive Cervid herds linked by animal movements and appropriate actions, possibly including quarantine and testing of linked animals, shall be taken. All costs associated with the quarantine and depopulation shall

be the responsibility of the licensee unless federal funds become available. In addition, the DNR will immediately initiate active and aggressive CWD surveillance of wild white-tailed deer outside the infected captive Cervid facility.

After all the CWD monitoring and precautions we go through, we could also be responsible for hundreds of thousands of dollars for surveillance. With the existence of CWD in the wild herds, what protections do we have that our herds will not become infected and shouldn't the DNR be held responsible for restitution as would be the case if such an event occurred under the Dept of Agriculture?

- **7.4.34** Failure to comply with these rules will result in the revocation of the Captive Cervid Facility License. Revocation shall count as a lapsed license requiring a new application to be completed and requiring that all rules and regulations applying to new captive Cervid facilities be followed to obtain a new Captive Cervid License.

Everything is at the Directors discretion and interpretation. And since it is evident how our present governing agency feels about our industry this rule is very threatening.

With respect to all the growing support we have with our legislators, both in the House and the Senate, we would hope this committee would recommend that the cervid farming industry in WV be placed under the proper farming authority, the WV Dept .Of Agriculture.

THANK YOU FOR YOUR TIME AND CONSIDERATION

John & Kathy Rose – Gone Huntin' Whitetails