

DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service

[Docket No. APHIS–2026–0563]

Chronic Wasting Disease Herd Certification Program Standards

AGENCY: Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, USDA.

ACTION: Notice of Availability.

SUMMARY: We are advising the public that we are making available for review and comment a revised version of the Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Herd Certification Program Standards. The CWD Program Standards provide guidance on how to meet CWD Herd Certification Program and interstate movement requirements. We are taking this action to address concerns of State and industry participants regarding the existing standards.

DATES: We will consider all comments that we receive on or before November 25, 2026.

ADDRESSES: You may submit comments by either of the following methods:

- *Federal eRulemaking Portal:* Go to www.regulations.gov. Enter APHIS–2026–0563 in the Search field. Select the Documents tab, then select the Comment button in the list of documents.

- *Postal Mail/Commercial Delivery:* Send your comment to Docket No. APHIS–2026–0563, Regulatory Analysis and Development, PPD, APHIS, 5601 Sunnyside Ave., #AP760, Beltsville, MD 20705.

Supporting documents and any comments we receive on this docket may be viewed at www.regulations.gov or in our reading room, which is located in room 1620 of the USDA South Building, 14th Street and Independence Avenue SW, Washington, DC. Normal reading room hours are 8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m., Monday through Friday, except holidays. To be sure someone is there to help you, please call (202) 799–7039 before coming.

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT: Dr. Tracy Nichols, Molecular Biologist, Cervid Health Staff, Strategy and Policy, Veterinary Services, APHIS; 2150 Centre Ave, Bldg. B, Fort Collins, CO 80526; (970) 494–7380; Tracy.A.Nichols@usda.gov.

SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION: Chronic wasting disease (CWD) is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy of cervids (members of Cervidae, the deer family). Species currently known to be susceptible to CWD include elk, mule deer, moose,

white-tail deer, sika deer, muntjac, axis, reindeer, and black-tail deer.

In 2014, the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) implemented the National CWD Herd Certification Program (HCP), a voluntary Federal-State-industry cooperative program administered by APHIS and implemented by participating States. States and herd owners choosing to participate must comply with the provisions of 9 CFR part 55 and all producers must comply with part 81 (referred to below as the regulations), which include requirements for animal identification, interstate movement, fencing, recordkeeping, herd inspections and inventories, animal mortality testing, and response to any findings of CWD-exposed, -suspect, or -positive herds. APHIS monitors the approved State HCPs to ensure consistency with Federal standards by means of annual State reporting and state reviews. With each year of successful compliance with the requirements, participating herds will advance in status. After 5 years of compliance with no evidence of CWD, the State or APHIS will certify the herd as being low risk for CWD. Farmed cervids may only move interstate from enrolled herds certified as low risk for CWD.

The CWD Program Standards, last revised in 2019, provide detailed guidance on how to meet the regulatory requirements referred to above. The Program Standards are reviewed on an ongoing basis by APHIS in collaboration with State agencies and industry representatives.

We are advising the public that we have prepared revisions of the CWD Program Standards. The proposed revisions include the following:

- Reducing the trace and quarantine period for white-tail and mule deer, and maintaining it for elk and other species.
- Updating indemnity prioritization to include reducing CWD transmission risk, strategically removing high risk animals, and encouraging HCP participation and genetic strategies to lower herd susceptibility.
- Making science-based updates and clarifications in areas that were open to interpretation.
- Including guidelines for use of predictive genetics to reduce herd CWD susceptibility and increase CWD prevention.
- Adding a section on the indemnity appeal process and revising the prioritization guidelines for indemnity funds to include predictive genetics.
- Allowance for moving cervids from a CWD positive herd to a terminal positive quarantined hunt facility in a

wildlife endemic area in another State with concurrence of the State Animal Health Authorities in the origin and receiving States.

The revised Program Standards may be viewed on the Regulations.gov website or in our reading room. (Instructions for accessing Regulations.gov and information on the location and hours of the reading room are provided under the heading **ADDRESSES** at the beginning of this notice.) The documents are also available by contacting the person listed under **FOR FURTHER INFORMATION CONTACT**.

We welcome public comment on this notice and the proposed revisions to the CWD Program Standards. After considering all comments, if no substantive changes to the proposed revisions to the CWD Program Standards are deemed necessary by the APHIS Administrator based on the comments received, the proposed revisions to the CWD Program Standards will be adopted as final without subsequent publication of another document in the **Federal Register**. If substantive changes to the proposed revisions are deemed necessary, we will publish an additional document in the **Federal Register** to discuss them and to make available a final version of the Program Standards that incorporates these substantive changes.

Authority: 7 U.S.C. 8301–8317; 7 CFR 2.22, 2.80, and 371.4.

Done in Washington, DC, this 21st day of October 2026.

Kelly Moore,

Administrator, Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

[FR Doc. 2026–21745 Filed 10–23–26; 8:45 am]

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DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE

National Institute of Food and Agriculture

Notice of Intent To Renew a Previously Approved Information Collection

AGENCY: National Institute of Food and Agriculture, USDA.

ACTION: Approval of notice and request for comments.

SUMMARY: In accordance with the Paperwork Reduction Act of 1995 and Office of Management and Budget (OMB) regulations, this notice announces the National Institute of Food and Agriculture's (NIFA) intention to renew a previously approved information collection entitled *Children,*