VERMONT AGENCY OF AGRICULTURE, FOOD & MARKETS FOOD SAFETY CONSUMER PROTECTION DIVISION Meat Inspection Service

MONTPELIER, VT Anson Tebbetts, Secretary

Vermont Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) Testing

CWD is a transmissible spongiform encephalopathy (TSE) of captive and wild cervid animals in the United States and Canada. State and federal regulations currently require CWD testing of all cervid mortalities that are 12 months or older, except for fallow deer. This document outlines the policy of the Vermont Agency of Agriculture, Food and Markets (VAAFM) pertaining to CWD testing of captive cervids at slaughter in Vermont.

The Food and Drug Administration (FDA) considers cervid animals that test positive for CWD at post-mortem to be adulterated and not fit for human food under the Federal Food, Drug and Cosmetic Act (FFDCA). Therefore, when a cervid animal is tested for CWD and slaughtered under voluntary inspection services, VAAFM cannot determine the wholesomeness of the carcass and parts without the CWD test results.

IPP are to retain, and not to apply or allow the establishment to apply the mark of inspection to carcasses of cervid animals, or parts thereof, until after "not detected" test results are received. IPP are to allow establishments to hold or further process (e.g., bone) these carcasses under inspection pending test results provided that the affected carcass or parts remain retained. IPP are to observe how the establishment addresses cross contamination during further processing of these products and ensure the carcass and parts are handled in a sanitary manner.

Tissues to take: Obex and Medial Retropharyngeal Lymph Nodes

Getting prepared to take the samples:

- 1. Organize your formalin containers, retain tags and utensils (knives or spoon/forceps). The various copies of the retain tags are for the carcasses, to keep with the tissues you are taking identified, and to put into the lug to retain the offal.
- 2. Verify that the producer obtained a movement permit for the cervids coming to slaughter. AH issues the movement permit and forwards a copy via email to the producer and to Meat Inspection (Dr. McNamara, Carrie Roberts, and Brault IPP). The permit is issued for the week of the slaughter date.





Retain tags wrapped and going into lug



Example of one animal sampled: Retain Tag, Farm Ear Tag, tissues



Photos courtesy: Indiana BOAH



Washing the head with the hose prior to sampling



Removing all ear tags

Sampling Procedure for Obex:

1. The head should be presented to you on the head rack by slaughter establishment personnel, upside down (ventral side up). You may need to rinse the blood off to see the tissues. Remove the RFID and farm ear tags.

 Locate the occipital condyles and foramen magnum (FM). Locate the brainstem inside the FM. Trim the dura mater around the brain-stem and cut the attached cranial nerve trunks, using the sharp spoon or knife.
Gently lift the brainstem with forceps and insert the spoon/knife into the **dorsal** aspect of the FM between the brainstem and **dorsal**

calvarium. 4. Advance the spoon 2-3 inches rostrally (forward towards the nose) until it contacts

(forward towards the nose) until it contacts bone to sever the cerebellum.

5. Re-position the spoon in the **ventral** aspect of FM between the brainstem and the **ventral** calvarium. Advance the spoon until it contacts bone and transversely sever the brainstem.

6. Remove the brainstem using the spoon and forceps. Examine to ensure the proper obex sample (Bifurcation or "V") is preserved.

7. Further trim the brainstem section by making a transverse cut 3/4 inch in front of the "V" shape bifurcation and an equal distance behind the bifurcation for good fixation.

For IHC testing – place the trimmed obex and brainstem pieces in 10% buffered formalin jar (10:1 ratio of formalin to tissue sample).



RFID button and bangle

Sampling Procedure for Medial Retropharyngeal Lymph Node:

 With the head positioned upside down, locate the esophagus and trachea below the foramen magnum (FM).
Lift the trachea and dissect muscles

forward of the foramen magnum (rostrally). Locate the left and right medial Retropharyngeal Lymph Nodes (MRPLN) half-way between each corner of the jaw bone and the FM, caudal to the nasopharynx, and deep to the salivary gland. LN consistency is much firmer and rounder than the surrounding tissue.

3. Remove each left and right medial RPLN and longitudinally incise each LN to confirm lymphoid tissue.

For IHC testing – place the medial RPLNs in the same formalin jar with the obex.



Some added pictures below:



Using knife to remove brainstem



Exposing Medial Retropharyngeal Lymph nodes



Removing Medial Retropharyngeal LN

Submission of Samples

Laboratory Submission Form:

- 1. You have the option of printing and filling out the form by hand or completing the form electronically and printing.
- 2. Refer to example form at the end of this document to determine the fields to fill out. The fields highlighted in the example need to be completed. Please note that there are some parts of the form that do not need to be filled out and there is no specific check-box for a CWD request. It is for that reason that the "CWD IHC ON RETROPHARYNGEAL LYMPH NODE(S) AND OBEX REQUESTED" request can just be put in the history section of the form. If only one animal sample is submitted, then there is no need to include the continuation form; if multiple animal samples are submitted, then the continuation form can be used as needed.
- 3. For the animal ID, **complete tag numbers for all of the tags in the animal's ears** should be recorded on the form (see example in attachments). These can include RFID tags, farm tags, etc.
- 4. Fax the form to the Animal Health Admin Asst. or to the Meat Inspection Admin Asst. (802-828-5983). They will create a UPS Label and fax it to Brault's, and also will schedule the UPS pickup for the following day. You may also want to make a copy of the form for your records.
- 5. Place the laboratory submission form into a plastic bag to protect it from moisture.

Packaging it up:

- 1. Ensure the formalin containers are closed tightly.
- 2. Write the ear tag number of each animal on the top of the formalin lid containing its tissues. On the bottle label, document the date of collection, species, the VT retain tag #, the herd owner, and that the bottle contains Obex and LN.
- 3. Place the formalin containers into a Ziploc bag with absorbent material (ie paper towel) and tightly secure the bag. Place this bag into a second bag and tightly secure it.
- 4. Place the small square VT sample seal on the outside of the bag(s) containing the formalin jars, and one on the bottom of the laboratory submission form in the space for "History".
- 5. Place the bagged containers and the bagged laboratory submission form into the shipping container and tape the box shut. Apply the large square VT box seal with your signature and date to the first set of flaps. Then close the outer set of flaps of the shipping container and tape closed.
- 6. Apply the UPS label to the shipping container.
- 7. Verify with the office that UPS is set to pick up the sample, and place the sample where UPS can pick it up from the plant.

Sample results:

- 1. Keep the ear tags in a bag until results are received.
- 2. The Animal Health Office will receive an email of the results from the lab. It takes between 5-10 business days for testing results.
- 3. The Animal Health Office will notify us of the results via email with an attached copy of the lab results.

Submission Template

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MULTIPLE ANIMAL SUBMISSION FORM Page

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KSVDL Use Only

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NOTE: This is a continuation of the General Sample Submission Form – Please fill out the General Submission Form completely and legibly.



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