

Health Beat by Dr. Shipley

I do a lot of CWD verification and some of the common problems that I run into are incomplete identifications, failure to submit heads/samples and poor record keeping. The state of Illinois has been pretty good to work with on these things and have been fairly lenient. There may come a time when they will not however, and at that point there may be people that lose their CWD status and they won't be allowed to move deer. Please make every attempt to identify your deer properly. The state now supplies tags free and it involves a little record keeping, but that is a small price to pay for the ability to sell your deer. Some states make producers run their deer through a chute system or tranquilize them so that tags can be inspected and inventories verified. I hope that that never happens here, but I could see a less lenient administrator making us do that some day. Also, make sure you check your deer every day or when you are gone, have someone else do it so that if one dies the head (or whole animal) can be submitted to the lab or to your veterinarian. This is especially true in hot weather where the brain turns to soup quickly or in cold weather where a frozen brain is unacceptable for sampling. There may come a time when unsubmitted samples may cost your status. Some state have rules that if a certain percent of animals are not submitted when they are eligible, then you can lose your status.. Our rules are simple, all animals over 16 months of age are supposed to be submitted, but the state has been fairly lenient. Once again, if this happens frequently, I worry that someone in the state office will eventually get strict and you're status will be gone. If you are moving a lot of deer or have a lot of deer, it's a chore to keep track of everything. I keep a notebook with me and I still find it difficult to always write it down! The shortest pencil is better than the longest memory!!

Anniversary dates are also easy to let go by. Keep track by posting your CWD, TB and Brucellosis test dates and when they are up in a prominent place.. You have a "grace" period to complete testing/certification (typically 90 days prior and 90 days post anniversary date), but once it's gone by, you may have to start all over again and that can mean lost sales, loss of status, and a real pain to try to get back in compliance. If in doubt, always talk to your local veterinarian or call the state or federal office to make sure that your dates are correct and what testing needs to be done. Hopefully national CWD rules will come soon and Illinois will change their Brucellosis testing rules. The latter is on the ILDFA agenda and hopefully will be on the agenda when the Illinois Board of Animal Health meets so that the rule can be changed.