



**CWD-POSITIVE ELK FOUND ON VALDERS FARM;
CONNECTED TO MINNESOTA CASES**

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MADISON -- An elk on a Manitowoc County farm has tested positive for chronic wasting disease, Wisconsin Department of Agriculture, Trade and Consumer Protection officials announced today.

The National Veterinary Services Laboratory in Ames, Iowa, reported Monday that a 6-year old female elk owned by Eugene Sperber, Valders, tested positive for CWD. It was sampled after it was killed in a fight with another elk.

The elk was one of 20 that Sperber imported in December 2000 and January 2001 from a Stearns County, Minn., herd that was later found to be infected. One of the imported animals had died previously, and was not tested. The remaining animals had been under quarantine since September, when Wisconsin animal health officials learned that they may have been exposed to CWD. The other 18 imported elk have been killed for testing. Results are still pending.

Officials have not determined the fate of the remaining 180 elk on Sperber's farm. These animals have been under quarantine since Jan. 31, when Minnesota officials confirmed exposure. The herd has been on the CWD monitoring program since April 2001, when it was still a voluntary pilot program. It is now mandatory for farms moving live animals.

Animal health investigators will conduct an epidemiological study to trace movements of elk from the Valders farm to other locations and find other animals that may have been exposed.

The Minnesota Board of Animal Health reported in August that an elk from an Aitkin County farm in northern Minnesota had tested positive for CWD. That animal had also spent time on two other farms, including the one in Stearns County, in central Minnesota. Wisconsin animal health officials immediately searched import records for any elk that might have entered the state from those three farms. They found 32 animals on six farms, including Sperber's. All were from the Stearns County farm and all were quarantined because of possible exposure.

In January, Minnesota's investigation turned up a CWD-positive elk on the Stearns County farm, which confirmed that the Wisconsin animals had been exposed. The owners had a choice of keeping animals under quarantine for five years, the national standard for proof of CWD-free status, or killing them for testing and receiving a federal indemnity. Sperber chose the latter. The depopulation was set for March 21, but on March 5, one of the elk was killed in a fight and tested. That is the positive result reported to DATCP Monday.

This is the seventh farm-raised animal in Wisconsin to test positive for CWD. The other six were whitetail deer.

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