



September 10, 2008

Dear Senator:

In August of this year, the Michigan Department of Agriculture (MDA) announced that testing of a white-tailed deer from a privately-owned captive cervid operation in Kent County was confirmed positive for Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD). Following a pre-existing and industry-approved action plan, the Michigan Department of Natural Resources (MDNR) subsequently announced a deer feeding and baiting ban for the entire Lower Peninsula, since research has shown that those practices provide an ideal environment for CWD transmission to uninfected deer.

We are writing to express our support for the MDA and DNR's swift implementation of their risk mitigation plan, particularly the baiting and feeding ban. It is a science-based approach, and not unique just to Michigan. In fact, twenty-one states currently do not allow the baiting of cervids while another nine states have certain restrictions on baiting to minimize their respective state's deer herd's exposure and transmission of CWD and other wildlife diseases. In addition, two Canadian provinces have banned baiting altogether and another province is currently reviewing baiting regulations. One cannot deny the science behind these strategies.

If decisions, albeit tough decisions, are made when infectious disease is first discovered, the impact to the wildlife population, the sporting community and the livestock industry will be minimized. Banning deer feeding and baiting, which are known factors in the spread of the disease, is an absolute necessity.

In the months to come, our respective organizations are committed to working with MDNR and the MDA to fine-tune the implementation and enforcement of science-based standards to minimize the spread of CWD and other infectious diseases.

Our organizations have been deliberate in getting accurate and timely information out to inform our constituencies about the action plan and why it is necessary. In addition, we have already been actively working with allied groups to develop alternative market outlets for agricultural producers negatively impacted by the feeding and baiting ban. One such avenue is the MSU Product Center with the support of MSU Extension, Project GREEN, the C.S. Mott Group, Greenstone Farm Credit, the Michigan Department of Agriculture, Michigan Farm Bureau, and other groups offers Michigan MarketMaker, a free web based clearinghouse for farmers and buyers of agricultural products. Farmers may use MarketMaker to identify potential buyers of their products or may register to be included in a searchable database for potential buyers.

The discovery of CWD requires drastic change to normally accepted hunting practices; change to our feeding and baiting regulations; and has potentially devastating impacts on farmers who rely on this practice for an outlet of often-times cull products that are not suitable for other uses. Small businesses who sell these baiting products are also going to be impacted. However, the devastating impact the spread of infectious diseases can have on Michigan's \$3 billion wildlife hunting business and its \$63.7 billion agriculture industry is obvious. If CWD spreads through the wild deer herd, we could see a rippling negative effect on Michigan's economy for decades to come.

We urge you to join us in supporting the continued implementation of the scientifically-based MDA and MDNR CWD Surveillance and Response Plan. We will also be happy to answer any questions you might have.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Wayne H. Wood'.

Wayne H. Wood, President
Michigan Farm Bureau

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'Dennis Muchmore'.

Dennis Muchmore, Executive Director
Michigan United Conservation Clubs