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# NEWS RELEASE

## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **FIRST CASE OF CHRONIC WASTING DISEASE CONFIRMED IN OHIO ON PRIVATE PRESERVE**

*Active steps taken to control further spread; no evidence the disease affects humans*

REYNOLDSBURG, Ohio (Oct. 23, 2014) – The Ohio Department of Agriculture and the Ohio Department of Natural Resources today confirmed the first positive case of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in the state in a captive deer operation in Holmes County. The state continues to take quarantine action to control the further spread of the disease. There is no evidence that CWD has affected the wild deer population in the state.

The positive sample was taken from a single buck on a hunting preserve in Millersburg and tested as part of Ohio's CWD monitoring program for captive white-tailed deer operations. The preserve had been under quarantine since April 24, 2014, and was subject to intensive monitoring and sampling protocols because of a known connection to a captive deer operation in Pennsylvania that tested positive for CWD earlier this year. The quarantine will remain enforced until the state is satisfied that disease transference can no longer occur.

“Ohio’s captive white-tail deer licensing program was enacted two years ago for the purpose of continuously monitoring the health of the captive deer populations in the state to manage the spread of and exposure to diseases such as CWD. We have worked closely with the Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture to identify and trace back positive cases,” said State Veterinarian Dr. Tony Forshey. “We will continue to take aggressive steps to ensure that CWD does not pose a threat to the state’s wild deer population.”

The state has quarantined 43 captive deer operations in Ohio since April 15, 2014 for receiving approximately 125 deer from operations in Pennsylvania that later tested positive for CWD. Twenty-two of those quarantines were lifted after negative CWD test results were confirmed in 53 of the suspect animals from Pennsylvania. ODA will continue to enforce quarantine restrictions on 21 operations, including five hunting preserves, until the department is satisfied that the threat of disease transference has passed.

The disease is fatal in deer, elk and moose, but there is no evidence CWD can be transmitted to humans, according to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and The World Health Organization. Though no human disease has been associated with CWD, the CDC recommends, as a precaution, that people or other animals do not eat any part of an animal diagnosed with or showing signs of CWD.

“We have no reason to believe that there has been transference to the state’s wild deer population,” said Scott Zody, Chief of the Ohio Department of Natural Resources’ Division of Wildlife. “With hunting

season in progress, there are no CWD concerns that should prevent anyone from enjoying wild deer hunting in Ohio or from consuming meat from healthy animals.”

The Division of Wildlife is recommending that hunters continue to take standard precautions such as shooting only animals that appear healthy, wearing rubber gloves when field-dressing their deer, and washing thoroughly when finished. If hunters should observe a deer that appears unhealthy, they are encouraged to contact their local wildlife office or officer.

Since 2002, the state has conducted surveillance throughout Ohio for the disease. State and federal officials will continue this regular sampling and testing throughout the hunting season to continue to monitor the health of the state’s wild deer population. Tissue samples from 753 deer killed on Ohio’s roads were collected from September 2013 through March 2014 and were tested for CWD. An additional 88 hunter-harvested mature white-tailed deer and nine deer displaying symptoms consistent with CWD were tested as well and were all negative.

In response to this positive finding, the Division of Wildlife will increase sampling efforts in the wild deer population within six miles of the hunting preserve from which the CWD-positive deer came as well as near the other captive operations that are under quarantine. Those samples will include high-risk animals such as those killed on roads or exhibiting neurological symptoms as well as hunter-harvested deer in the area.

CWD, first discovered in captive mule deer in Colorado in 1967, attacks the brains of infected deer, elk and moose, producing small lesions that eventually result in death. It is transmitted by direct animal-to-animal contact through saliva, feces and urine. Signs of the disease include weight loss, excessive salivation, increased drinking and urination, and abnormal behavior like stumbling, trembling and depression. Infected deer and elk may also allow unusually close approach by humans or natural predators. The disease is fatal in deer and there is no known treatment or vaccine.