

# First case of Chronic Wasting Disease in Europe confirmed

04/19/2016 | [Short Messages](#)

In the beginning of April 2016, the first case of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) in Europe was confirmed in Norway in a reindeer. CWD belongs to the transmissible spongiform encephalopathies, which also include scrapie in small ruminants and BSE in cattle. Currently, transmission to humans cannot fully be ruled out. However, similarly to scrapie, the risk seems to be very limited.

Based on Commission Decision 2007/182/EC a survey program for CWD was carried out in the [EU](#) from 2007 to 2009. In the frame of this program, 13,000 samples from wild ruminants which are closely related to the animal species affected in North America, particularly red deer and white-tailed deer, were investigated for CWD; all samples were negative. For Germany, a sample size of 598 free-ranging and 598 farm-raised game animals was determined. In 2011, CWD surveillance was stopped.

Currently, resumption of CWD surveillance in Europe is discussed. The collected data will permit well-founded conclusions with regard to possible risks and efficient control measures.

CWD has been known since the 1960s and has spread over the North American continent within the last 20 to 30 years, beginning in Wyoming and Wisconsin; so far, cases have been recorded in 23 federal states and two Canadian provinces, as well as in South Korea. Diseased animals excrete the pathogen in urine and saliva, the agent is stable in the soil for several years. Therefore, it is nearly impossible to control a spread in the wildlife population.

Disinfection of clothes which have come into contact with CWD contaminated material is impossible. Therefore, disposal of such pieces of clothing is recommended.

So far, it is unknown if the pathogen is distributed in Europe. With regard to CWD, nothing contradicts the import of venison, hides and trophies (if the skull is undamaged!) from the endemic areas of North America.



Roaring Stag (© Daniel Balkema, [FLI](#))