

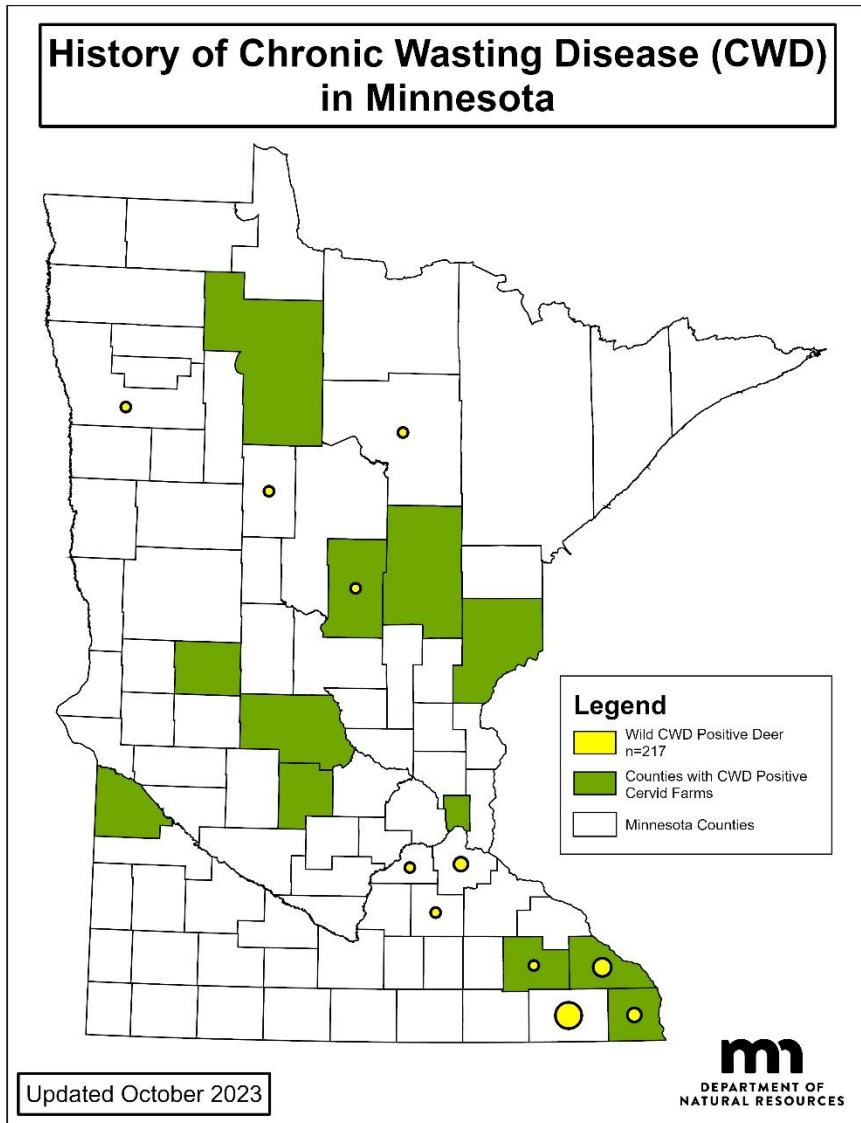


# CWD and Farmed Deer Program Status Updates House ENV Hearing - October 23, 2023

Dr. Kelly Straka, Wildlife Section Manager

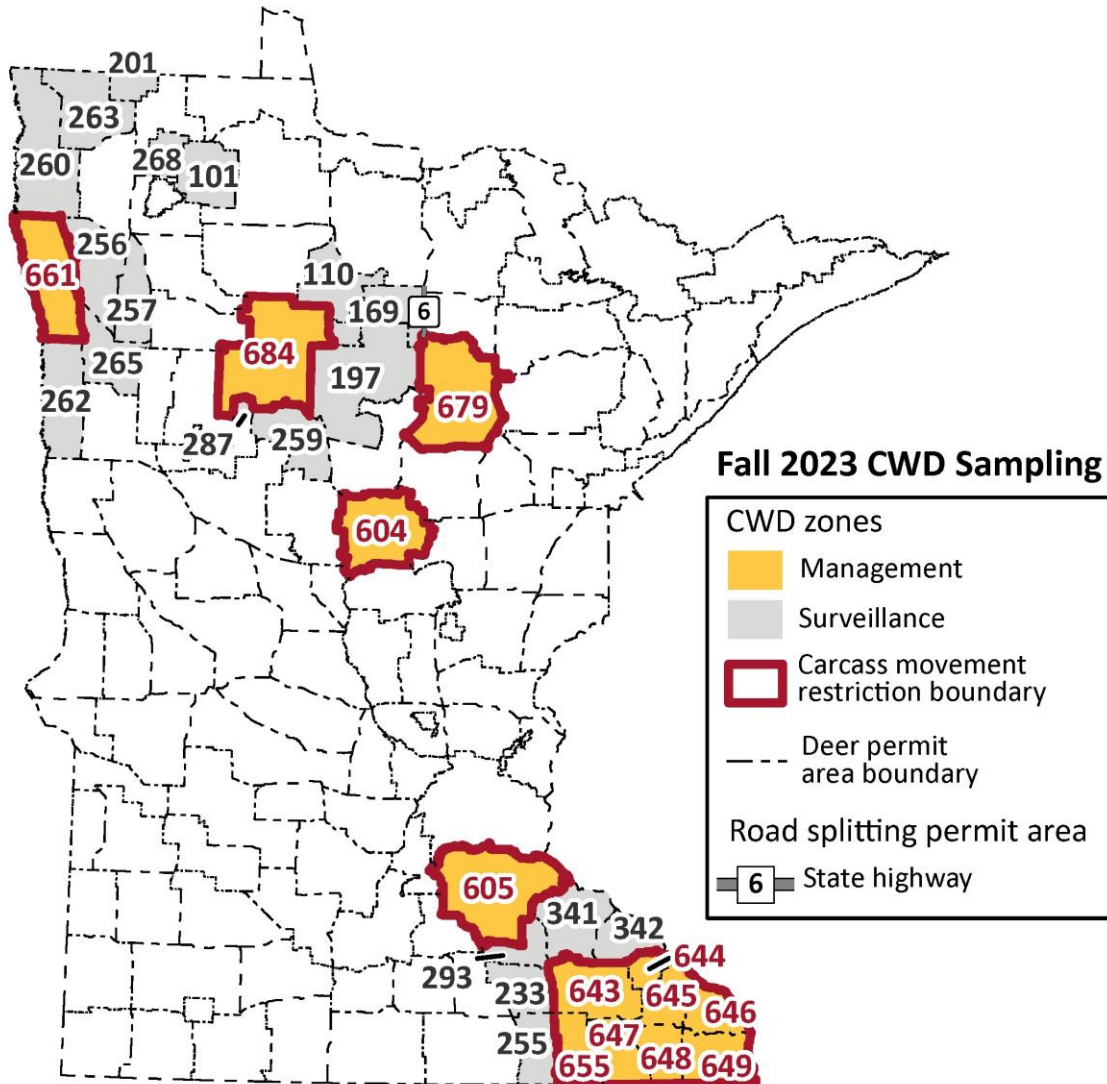
Mike Oehler, Farmed Deer and Captive Species Coordinator

# Chronic Wasting Disease in Minnesota: Current Status



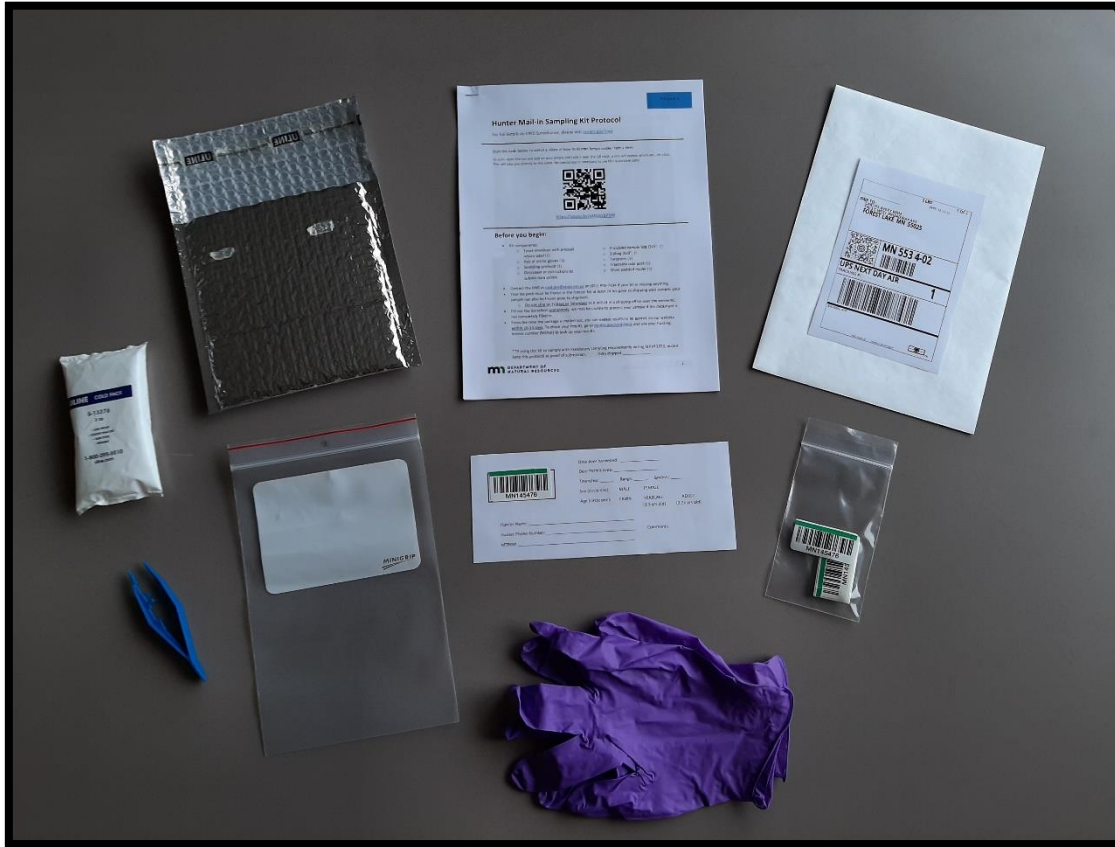
- 120,000 wild deer tested since 2002
  - 217 positive (mostly SE)
- Wild elk and moose since 2004
  - No detections
- 13 captive cervid facilities
  - Most recent in 2022

# Overview of CWD Surveillance Plan for Fall 2023



- Mandatory sampling opening weekend
- High hunter compliance
  - 87% in 2022
- 239 DNR staff and 120 students
- Voluntary testing options available statewide

# Hunter Mail-in Kits



- Piloted in 2022
- Available statewide at no cost
- 10k kits built
  - 4,500 requests so far
- Partner groups, Area Offices, Online



- 8,000+ samples since 2016
  - 16 CWD positives
- Important partnership with taxidermists
  - Minnesota Conservation Federation!
- USDA-APHIS grant
- 133 vendors so far



# Managing CWD: Partnership with Hunters & Landowners

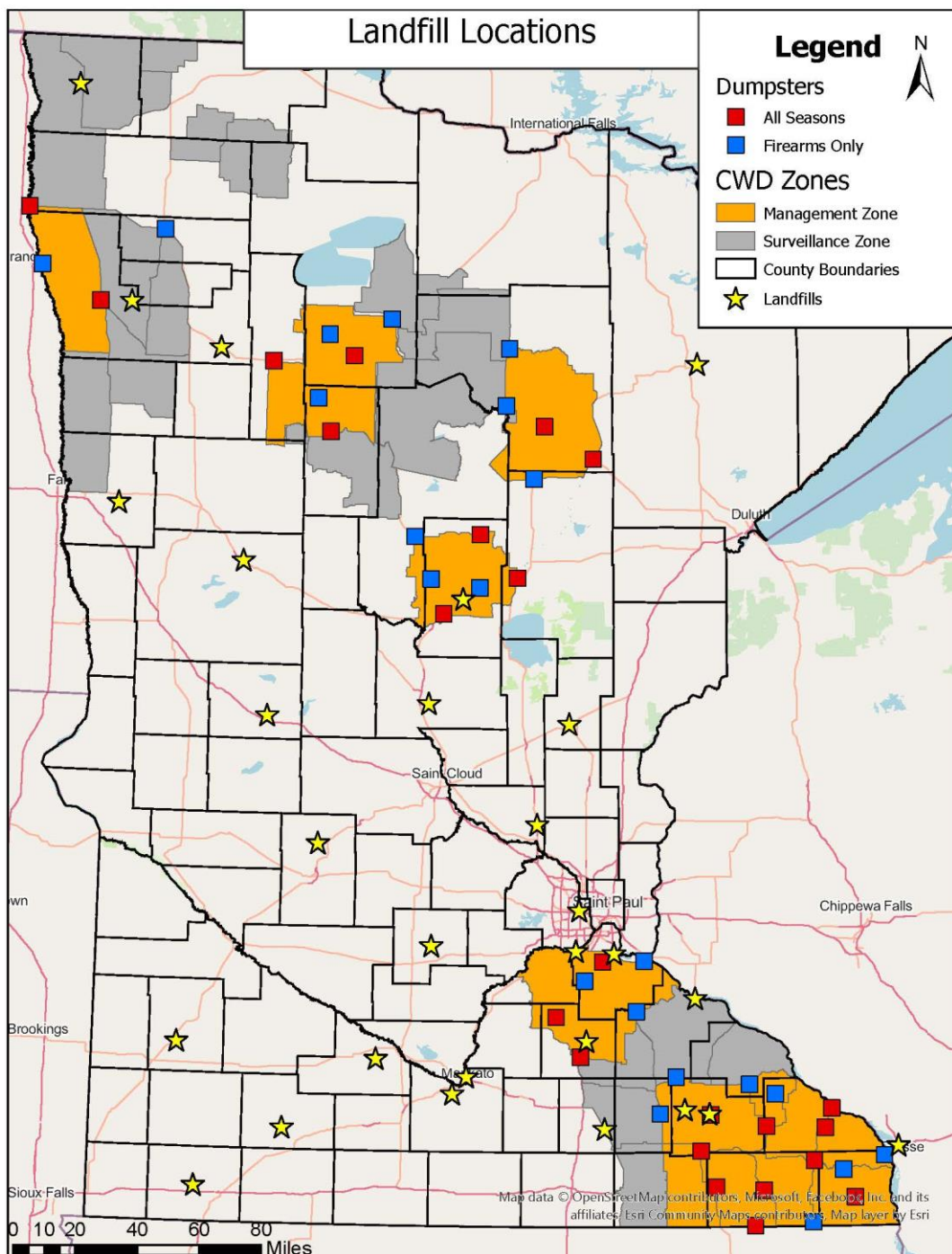
- Carcass movement restrictions
- Dumpster program
- Cervid carcass importation ban
- Recreational feeding and attractant bans
- Increased hunter opportunities
  - Additional seasons, \$2.50 disease management tags
- Partnerships with conservation groups



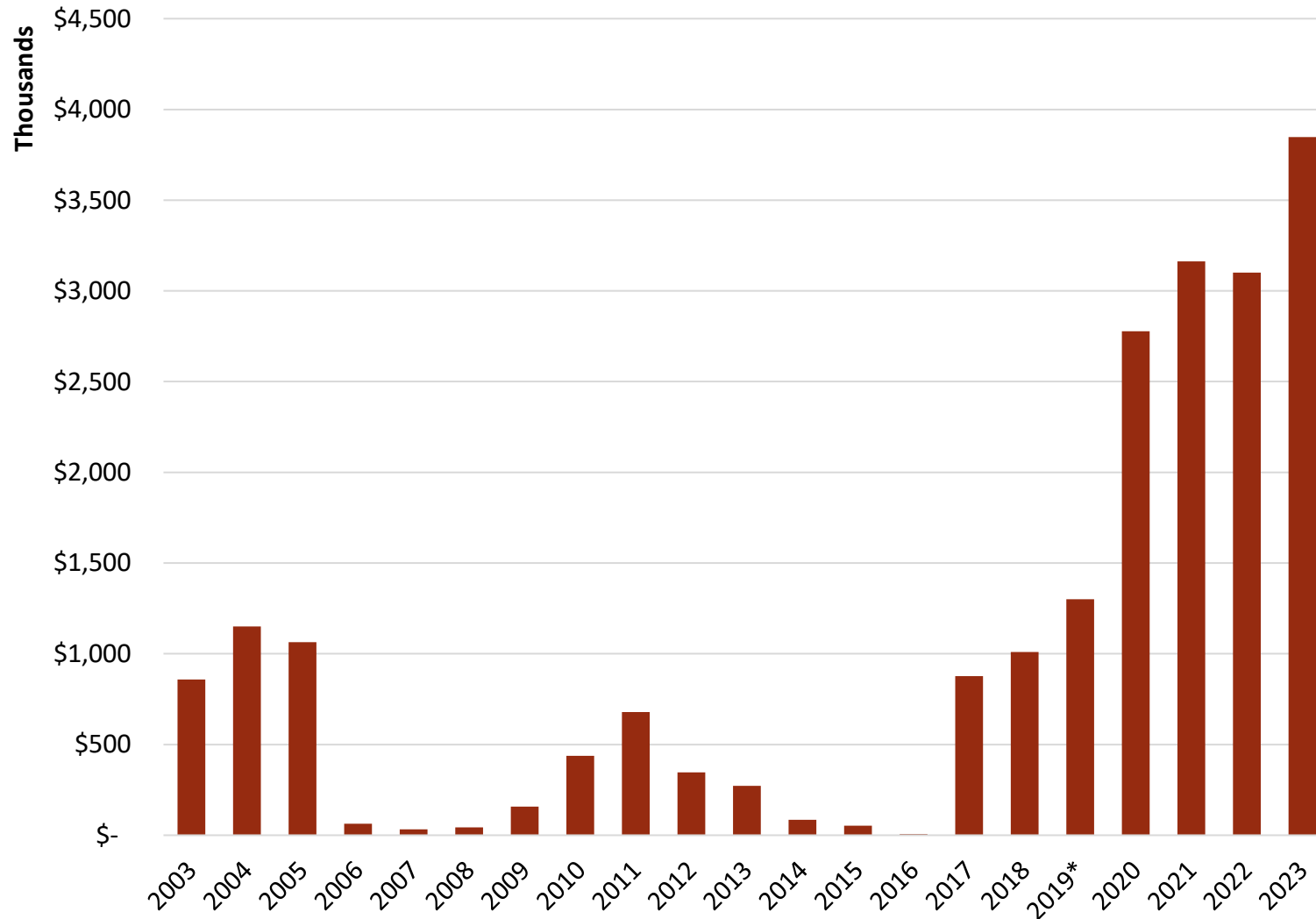


# DNR's Deer Dumpster Program - 2023

- 43 sites in CWD Management Zones
- Expect to hit 225 tons of deer waste removed
- Approved landfills



# *Investments in Wild Cervid CWD-Related Efforts*



Total CWD spending  
FY03- FY23:  
\$21,320,870



# Summary

- CWD remains a rare disease in MN
- Aggressive approach to protect statewide deer population and our hunting heritage
- **Adapt** as we assess effectiveness
- We cannot be successful in managing this disease without the help of legislators, hunters, cooperators, and businesses

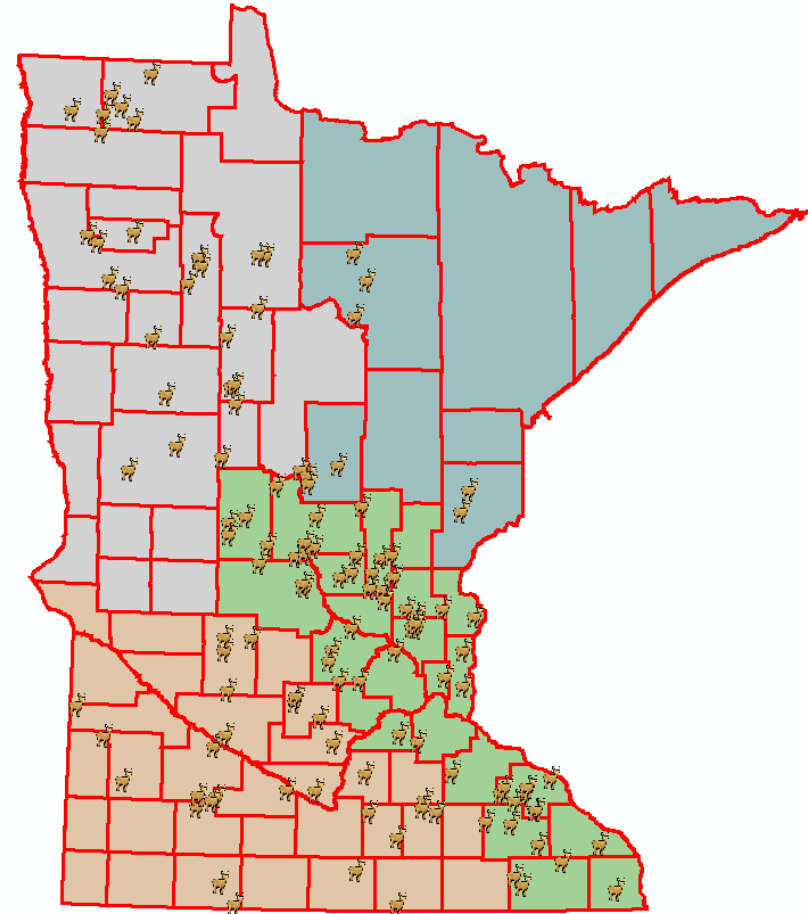
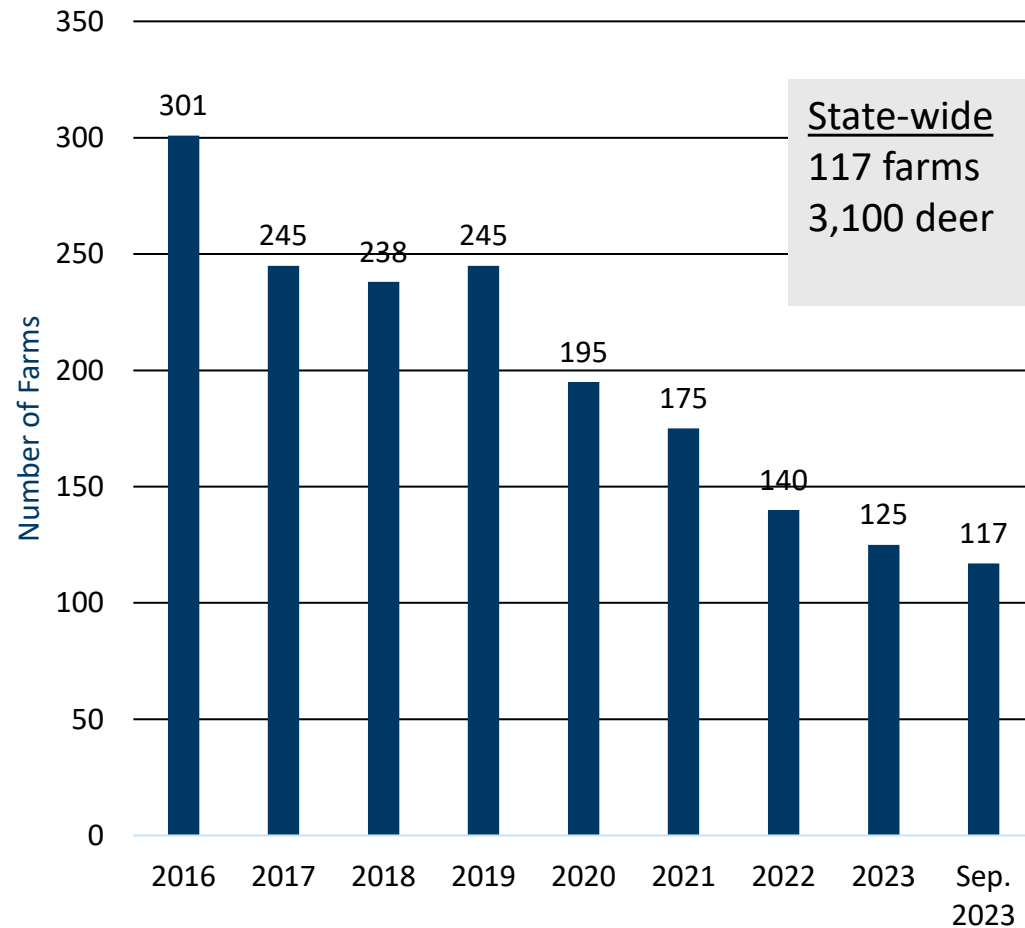




# Farmed Deer Program Status Updates House ENV Hearing - October 23, 2023

Mike Oehler, Farmed Deer and Captive Species Coordinator

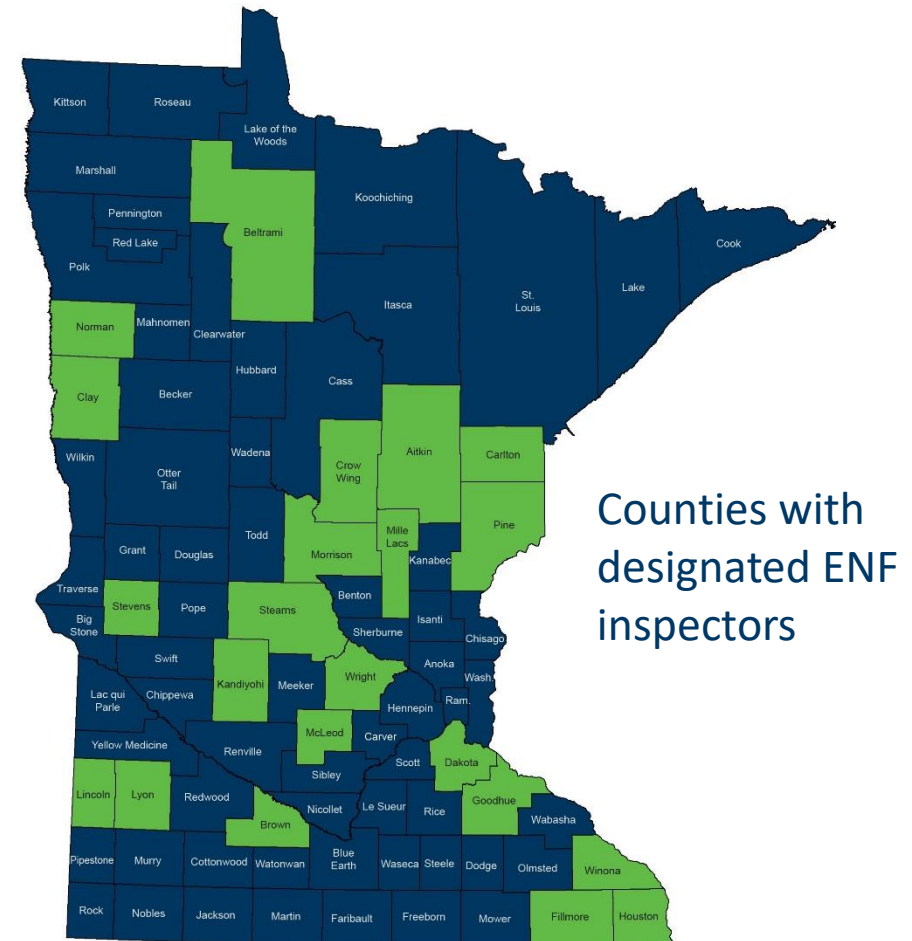
# Farmed deer update - WTD/WTD-mixed farms in MN





# Current farmed deer program staff

- Mike Oehler Farmed Deer and Captive Species Coordinator (October 2022).
- Lt. Robert Haberman, Animal Health Coordinator (position – July 2022).
- ~25 COs across the state to conduct annual inspections.
- OAS-Intermediate to be hired soon.



# DNR accomplishments since July 1, 2023

- Daily oversight of WTD herds
  - 58 inspections conducted (some joint).
  - One transfer of registration.
  - One escape event Oct. 10<sup>th</sup> (2 deer)
- Completed interagency agreement with BAH.
- Created farmed deer webpage.
- Developed online payment portal for producers.
- MNPRO consultation (initial and quarterly).
- MOU with USDA to administer herd certification program (joint with BAH).

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## White-tailed deer

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[Bovine Tuberculosis](#)  
[Chronic Wasting Disease](#)  
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## Fish & Wildlife

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## Dollars at work

[License](#)  
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## Management

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## Deer farms

Effective July 1, the DNR will administer and enforce certain statutes and rules governing white-tailed deer farms. Review below the areas of DNR responsibility that directly impact white-tailed deer farms and farmers.

Responsibility for all other farmed cervids, including elk, falls to the [Minnesota Board of Animal Health](#) [↗](#).

### Farmed deer contacts

#### Wildlife

Mike Oehler  
Farmed deer and captive species coordinator  
1509 First Ave. North  
Fergus Falls, MN 56357  
218-671-7949  
[michael.oehler@state.mn.us](mailto:michael.oehler@state.mn.us) [↗](#)

#### Enforcement

Lt. Robert Haberman  
Animal health coordinator  
1201 East Highway 2  
Grand Rapids, MN 55744  
218-204-1212  
[robert.haberman@state.mn.us](mailto:robert.haberman@state.mn.us) [↗](#)

### Farm information and resources

- [+ Forms](#)
- [+ Inspection and inventories](#)
- [+ How to pay fees](#)
- [+ Provisions effective July 1, 2023](#)
- [+ Provisions effective Sept. 1, 2023](#)
- [+ Provisions effective Sept. 1, 2024](#)

### Background

There are 125 registered white-tailed deer farms in Minnesota with a total of 3,325 deer. [Changes in state law](#) [↗](#) enacted in 2023 transferred management authority of white-tailed deer farms from BAH to DNR.

DNR had regulatory authority over white-tailed deer producers until 2005, when the Legislature transferred that authority to BAH. In 2021, the Legislature granted co-authority to DNR and BAH.

# Interagency agreement with BAH

- DNR responsibilities

- Farm inspections (joint on mixed).
- Herd inventories (annual and physical).
- Compliance/violations WTD.
- Administration of USDA herd certification program.
- Monitoring mortalities and CWD testing.
- Jointly handle CWD + herds with BAH.

- BAH responsibilities (DNR funded)

- CWD sample collection training program.
- Import/movement of WTD.
- Tuberculosis and Brucellosis programs.
- Provide program/software training for DNR staff.
- Jointly handle CWD+ herds with DNR.



# Some challenges associated with transition

- Producer confusion
  - Uncertainty for their farm.
  - Where to get/send forms?
  - Who to contact?
- Mixed herd challenges
  - Collection of revenue.
  - Management of records.

# How is the transition going?







# Division of Fish and Wildlife: Wildlife Research Unit

## Neonicotinoid Update

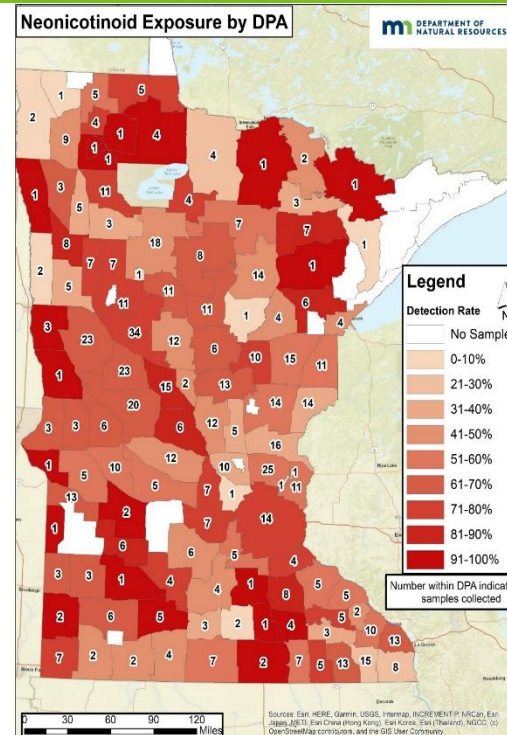


# Neonicotinoids in Wildlife: Previous Work



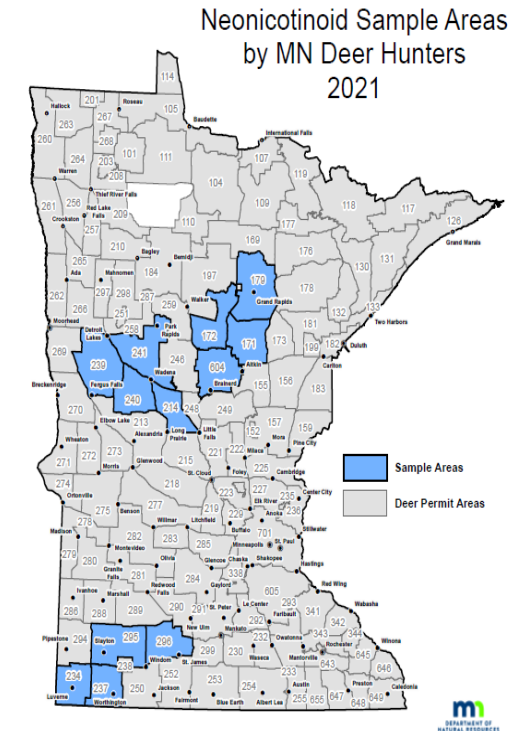
2016-2017: High prevalence of exposure in prairie chickens and sharp-tailed grouse

- 76-93% of birds tested in spring and fall



2019: Collected spleens from hunter-harvested deer

- Widespread exposure
- Concentrations high enough to affect fawn survival?



2021: Identify exposure levels within ecoregions

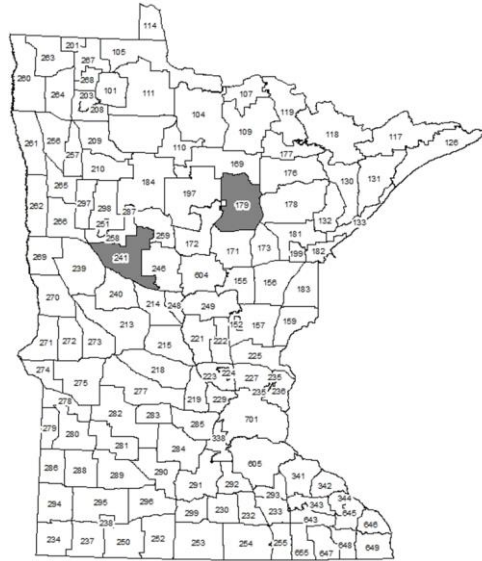
- Deer exposure to neonics may be ubiquitous across all ecoregions

# Neonicotinoids in Wildlife: Continued Work



## Sharp-tailed grouse and prairie chicken

- Determine individual and population level effects
- Results expected FY26



## White-tailed deer and antemortem sample testing

- Evaluate ability to detect neonics in blood, urine, and feces
- Results expected FY24/25

## FUTURE STUDIES

### Spruce grouse

- Evaluate possible routes of wildlife exposure in forested systems
- Results expected FY25

### Ring-necked Pheasant

- Assess detection in different tissues from hunter harvested birds
- Assess concentrations on arthropods, forbs, and soils on WMAs
- Results expected FY27



# Thank You!

