



Whitecourt Fish & Game Association
Box 3
Whitecourt, Alberta
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November 25, 2021

To whom it may concern,

The Whitecourt Fish & Game Association (WFGA) wishes to address our concerns and opposition in respect to the proposed "Cervid Harvesting Preserves" and Game Farms in Alberta.

We understand the Alberta Elk Commission has established a Subcommittee to pursue the legalization of Cervid Harvesting Preserves (CHPs) in Alberta. They are lobbying the Government of Alberta to change legislation to allow this. They have been trying to implement this change for many years. Every time there is a new Government, they pursue this agenda. To date they have failed.

WFGA is a non-profit group which annually is composed of approximately 900 members. Our membership strongly supports the conservation and utilization of the Fish and Wildlife Resources in Alberta and in fact is concerned about all aspects of Canada's outdoors and outdoor pursuits.

WFGA is affiliated with the Alberta Fish and Game Association (AFGA) which represents approximately 24,000 members in over 80 clubs throughout Alberta and is the primary voice of Alberta's hunters and anglers. They have voiced their concern and opposition to Game Farms and the proposed Cervid Harvesting Preserves in Alberta. WFGA supports the AFGA in their opposition to Game Farms and Cervid Harvesting Preserves in Alberta.

There was substantial opposition at the time Cervid (Elk and Deer) Game Farms were established in Alberta in the 1980s and that opposition continues to this day. There was great concern about disease and parasites in these captive animals especially in relation to the possibility of these diseases and parasites being transmitted to wild animals or to other domestic breeds of livestock. There were and continue to be other concerns as well:

- Non reporting or not reporting within required timelines of sick or dead animals.
- Noncompliance with other required rules and regulations associated with Game Farming
- Unlawful procuring of deer and elk from the wild.
- Unlawful trafficking in animals and their parts.
- Captive elk and deer escaping to the wild and problems associated with recapture.
- Inadequate enforcement (Fish and Wildlife Officers are no longer doing compliance enforcement and investigations.)

In December of 1990 the first case of tuberculosis was discovered in Game Farmed elk in southern Alberta. In March 2002 the first case of Chronic Wasting Disease (CWD) was found in Game Farmed Elk approximately 30 km from Whitecourt.

In November of the same year (2002), the first case of CWD was found in an Alberta Game Farmed Whitetail Deer. Many more cases of CWD in Game Farmed deer and elk have occurred since then.

It is important to note that in most cases when these diseases were/are discovered in these Game Farms, all the elk or deer on these farms were/are destroyed. We believe this is still the practice today. In addition, the game farmer was/is fully compensated for all the animals killed. Taxpayers' pay the compensation. It is difficult to understand why the Game Farmers are not required to have adequate insurance to compensate for their losses. Many millions of dollars have been paid to Alberta Game Farmers in compensation since the inception of Game Farms all at the taxpayers' expense.

We believe the introduction of CWD to our wild populations of elk and deer is directly a result of the establishment of Game farming of these animals in Alberta.

The first case of CWD in wild deer was discovered in 2005. Since then, the total number of CWD infected deer tested is more than 3000. That number will continue to rise and the area in which the disease is found will continue to increase.

We believe Game Farms continue to pose a risk to wild ungulate populations. There is something ethically wrong about treating these animals as livestock. They deserve to retain their wild designation. The WFGA is strongly opposed to Game Farming and is calling on the Alberta Government to eliminate game farms in Alberta.

The WFGA believes that hunting is an important part of our history and culture. It is a pursuit that helps us to connect to our past. It brings us closer to nature. It is satisfying to provide food to our families just as our ancestors have done. It is extremely important to us to hunt ethically and in a sportsmanlike way. You can take pride if you are fortunate enough to harvest an animal in this responsible manner. Hunting elk and deer in a penned enclosure does not represent any of the core values we have expressed. No matter how you dress it up, you are hunting animals behind a fence. These animals cannot truly escape. The public today is scrutinizing hunting more than ever before. We believe that allowing Cervid Harvesting Preserves will result in Public opposition to all hunting.

The WFGA is asking the Alberta Government to please consider the irreversible ecological and cultural damage that would result from "Cervid Harvesting Preserves" and take our views into consideration and to do what is ethically right. Please eliminate Game Farms in Alberta and do not allow the hunting of captive elk and deer.

Sincerely,

Rick Fetch
President
Whitecourt Fish and Game Association