



The Alberta Fish & Game Association

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Alberta Fish & Game Association Concerned about re-appearance of Kill Farms

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

(Edmonton April 1, 2009)... Alberta's largest conservation group, the Alberta Fish & Game Association (AFGA), is gravely concerned about allegations that the Alberta Provincial Government is once again discussing behind closed doors and without public consultation the implementation of Elk & Deer Kill Farms in a last ditch effort to save the struggling game farm industry in Alberta. The way this works is that an interested customer pays a fee to the game farmer and is then allowed to shoot a tame deer or elk of their choice.

Kill farms were most recently defeated in 2002-03 after a public uproar initiated by the AFGA in concert with other conservation groups convinced the government of the day not to proceed. Since then the farmed elk and deer industry has been on a steady decline with much of its revenue coming from antler velvet sales widely used world wide in traditional Asian medicine to treat conditions such as impotence, arthritis and high blood pressure.

Game farms have been linked to the introduction and spreading of Chronic Wasting Disease(CWD), the ungulate equivalent of mad cow, which is a contagious, fatal disease of deer and elk that continues to spread throughout North America.

With the recent results of a study conducted at the University of Kentucky Medical Center, Lexington, Kentucky (Angers RC, Seward TS, Napier D, Green M, Hoover E, Spraker T, et al. *Chronic wasting disease prions in elk antler velvet. Emerg Infect Dis. 2009 May; [Epub ahead of print]*), that concludes: "...that studies indicate that antler velvet represents a previously unrecognized source of CWD prions in the environment" and "... that antler velvet represents an additional source for human exposure to CWD prions" being released, the industry will probably lose more ground. The Kill Farm program is viewed as a last gasp at making some money as non-resident hunters have been known to pay over ten thousand dollars to shoot a tame elk in those jurisdictions where kill farms are legal.

"This is an outrage," said Quentin Bochar, AFGA President, "and really hope it's not true that the Government is going behind everyone's back to try and bail out a few individuals who made bad business decisions in the first place when they got into the game farm business. Game farms are just a bad idea as other jurisdictions are finding out and are indeed closing them down. We encourage the government to follow suit and compensate game farmers for closing down their operation."

He went on to encourage all AFGA members to get in contact with their local MLAs to get the truth behind this concern.

The Alberta Fish and Game Association is a not-for-profit volunteer organization proud to serve Albertans in the promotion of the wise use of our fish and wildlife resources and the conservation of their habitats. The AFGA has been active since 1908 in working towards these goals and has a province-wide membership of more than 19,000 individuals spread among 100+ Clubs.

Link to MLA contact info:

http://www.assembly.ab.ca/net/index.aspx?p=mla_home

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