

quarantine.

Indemnity from State programs has not been adequate to pay fair market value for depopulated elk, so each depopulation has caused considerable financial loss to the herd owner. Because no funds are available within APHIS for depopulation and payment of indemnity, the only option for producers to gain some compensation for eliminating a CWD-positive herd is to slaughter the animals for human consumption. This option represents a very limited incentive for producers to participate in an eradication program. Also, it poses potential problems related to contamination of slaughter facilities and potential human exposure to preclinical infected animals that are not detectable with our current testing tools.

Aggressive action in controlling this disease now will decrease the chance of having to deal with a much larger, widespread, and costly problem later, such as the situation with BSE in Europe. The European Union is struggling to rebuild consumer confidence in Europe's beef after recent outbreaks of BSE in France, Spain, and Germany. As demonstrated in Europe, once shaken, consumer confidence is very difficult to rebuild. BSE's human form, known as variant Creutzfeldt- Jakob Disease (vCJD), has killed more than 80 people in the United Kingdom and 2 in Spain. There is no known cure for this deadly disease, or for any of the other diseases caused by TSE's that affect humans or animals. Although there is currently no evidence that CWD is linked to disease in humans, or in domestic animals other than deer and elk, a theoretical risk of such a link exists. Public perception and consumer fears that CWD from deer and elk could cause disease in humans or in domestic livestock could destroy the markets for elk or deer products. Canada has prohibited the import of U.S. cervids due to CWD, and other countries are contemplating import restrictions on elk and deer and their products. Recently, Korea informed APHIS that it is temporarily suspending the importation of deer and elk and their products from the United States and Canada.

Without a Federal program in place to depopulate infected and exposed animals, the movement of infected elk into new herds and States with no known infection will continue or may even accelerate. APHIS needs to take action to document the prevalence of the disease and to prevent its further spread. Furthermore, the Agency needs to demonstrate, as with other TSE's, that it is able and willing to take early and effective action to protect the health of U.S. animals and animal industries.

Therefore, in order to address the CWD threat to U.S. livestock, APHIS has determined that additional funds are needed for a CWD eradication program. In addition to the purchase of animals, the additional funds will be used for program activities such as depopulation and disposal, clean-up and disinfection, establishment of surveillance and certification programs, testing, implementation and maintenance of