

Agriculture

Chronic wasting disease bill clears committee

Chronic wasting disease — or zombie deer disease — poses a threat to Kentucky’s deer and elk population and industry, experts say. Rep. Josh Bray, R-Mount Vernon, wants to prevent that from happening.

Bray is the primary sponsor of House Bill 700, which he presented to the House Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee on Thursday alongside Kentucky Fish and Wildlife Commissioner Rich Storm.

The legislation would place restrictions on the movement of cervids (deer and elk) in chronic wasting disease (CWD) surveillance zones.

Storm said chronic wasting disease is a 100% incurable and fatal prion disease. The only way to test an animal for the disease is by testing a lymph node from the base of the deer’s skull. Bray said the disease cannot be transmitted to humans, but other prion diseases, like mad cow disease, are transmissible to humans.

Kentucky has had two isolated cases of chronic wasting disease, Bray said, but other states haven’t been so lucky. In states where the disease has spread, hunting tourism has declined.

“My greatest fear — as I sit here today — if we do nothing, and CWD spreads across this state, once it hits interior Kentucky, we will forever wish we had done something today,” Bray said.

Storm said Kentucky has a conservation and fiduciary responsibility to preserve Kentucky’s cervid population and \$2 billion hunting industry. Kentucky also has a thriving deer farming industry.

Under HB 700, it would be unlawful to export any wild cervid outside a CWD surveillance zone. Those zones are defined

as a 30-mile radius from a positive CWD detection, according to the legislation.

For captive cervids, the bill would make it unlawful to export a captive cervid outside a 10-mile radius from a CWD positive captive cervid facility. Cervid facilities who install double fencing could be exempt from some of the regulations in HB 700, Bray said.

The bill would allow a CWD surveillance zone designation to expire five years after the zone’s last positive CWD case.

Storm said the legislation would still allow the export of certain cervid products.

“They will be able to continue to sell (boneless) meat, the byproducts, the antlers,” he said.

Several representatives of Kentucky’s deer farming industry testified they’re already taking precautionary measures when it comes to CWD.

Henry Woodard, who serves on the Kentucky Alternative Livestock Association board, said deer farming is already heavily regulated by Fish and Wildlife, the Department of Agriculture and the USDA.

“We take CWD very seriously,” he said. “... We have a CWD response plan already in the state, and it is a response plan by our Department of Ag that we fall under. We test every mortality in our herds for CWD, regardless of proximity to a CWD positive case.”

Woodard said HB 700 could shut down many of Kentucky’s deer farms.

Several lawmakers had questions about CWD, including how to test for it.

Rep. William Lawrence, R-Maysville, asked about the future of a live test for CWD where farmers and Fish and Wildlife would be able to test a live cervid.



Rep. Josh Bray, R-Mount Vernon, testifies on House Bill 700 before the House Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee on Thursday. The bill would place restrictions on the movement of deer and elk, or cervids, in chronic wasting disease (CWD) surveillance zones.

Bud Kraft

Storm said he’s “very confident” there will be a live test in the years to come, but right now there isn’t one that’s approved.

“When the day comes that there’s a live test, we can absolutely come back in and change all of this, because it won’t be as necessary,” Bray said.

Lawrence said he understands the urgency behind HB 700, but he worries how the bill may hurt deer farmers.

“If I was told I couldn’t (operate) for the next five years, it

could crush my business,” Lawrence said, adding he hopes the legislature could communicate the sense of urgency for a live test on a federal level.

The House Tourism and Outdoor Recreation Committee approved HB 700 by a 13-1 vote with three pass votes.

In explaining his “yes” vote, Rep. Adam Moore, D-Lexington, said he’s looking forward to using the “robust” legislative process to make sure HB 700 is as “perfect a bill as is possible.”

Bray said he and Storm have been working with all stakeholders, including the farmers, on the bill and are hoping to find a solution everyone can be content with.

“I love deer. I love deer hunting,” Bray said. “I would never want to do anything to hurt anybody’s business, but there’s far too much to lose if we sit here and do nothing.”

HB 700 now goes before the full House for consideration.

— Submitted

2025-2026 Kentucky fishing and hunting licenses available now

Licenses and permits are available now to fish, hunt and trap in Kentucky in the coming license year, beginning March 1. With some of the finest outdoor opportunities available anywhere, Kentucky’s fields, woods and waterways provide adventure for avid outdoors enthusiasts and newcomers alike.

The 2025-2026 license year began on Saturday, March 1, and runs through Feb. 28 of next year. License and permit fees for Kentucky residents are unchanged from the 2024-2025 license year, which lasts until Friday, and most non-resident fees will remain the same.

In Kentucky, a license covers basic hunting or fishing for many species, whereas additional state permits are required when pursuing specific other species, such as fishing for trout or hunting for migratory birds, deer, wild turkey or black bear. Sportsmen’s-type licenses include multiple permits as well as basic hunting and fishing privileges.

For the 2025-2026 license year, prices for four non-resident options reflect a moderate fee increase, including:

Annual Hunting License (non-resident) — \$160

Spring Turkey Permit (non-resident) — \$110

Fall Turkey Permit (non-resident) — \$110

Deer Permit (non-resident) — \$235

Introduced last year, the resident Senior Lifetime Sportsman’s License remains priced at \$180. It includes hunting and fishing licenses plus permits for trout, deer, spring and fall turkey, migratory game birds and waterfowl. It is available to Kentucky residents aged 65 and

older, who can purchase it once and then simply carry an electronic copy or reprint each year to display the current license year.

Seniors in Kentucky still have the option to purchase an annual Senior Sportsman’s License that provides the same licenses and permits for the license year for just \$12. Resident anglers have the option to purchase an annual Fishing License for \$23 or a 3-year Fishing License for added convenience and value at just \$55.

Licenses and permits are sold online through Kentucky Fish and Wildlife’s website License Sales portal, searchable off the homepage at fw.ky.gov. Licenses and permits also are sold at agent locations across the state. A list of license agents by county is available on the department’s website.

The department receives its primary funding through revenue raised by the sale of hunting and fishing licenses, as well as federal excise taxes generated by the sale of recreational firearms and ammunition, archery gear

and fishing equipment.

Springtime provides many opportunities to take someone new into the field. Youth turkey weekend is April 5-6, while the main turkey season opens a week later, on April 12. The Youth Sportsman’s License, available to residents ages 12-15, is a great value at \$30 and covers turkey hunting and deer hunting.

The warmer weather also provides for fantastic fishing across the state. Learn about those opportunities in our Fishing and Boating Guide. The 2025-2026 guide will be available on the agency website March 1.

Another great resource is the Fish Boat KY app. Available free from iTunes and Google Play, the app helps anglers find waterbodies, boat ramps and other water access from the palm of their hand. Users can also search by species of fish, store copies of their licenses, and much more using the smartphone app.

To learn all the basics on hunting and fishing, the Kentucky Fish and Wildlife website (fw.ky.gov) has

many resources for individuals new to the sports. For in-person classes, search Hook and Cook or Field to Fork on the site. Classes are offered across the state to provide learning opportunities for all ages.

Anglers from throughout the central United States come to Kentucky to fish its waters, including the state’s renowned trout fishery in the Cumberland River and the crappie fishery in Kentucky and Barkley lakes. Kentucky is a top destination nationally for deer hunting and maintains the largest elk herd east of the Rocky Mountains. The application period to apply for a 2025 elk hunt runs through April 30.

For more information about hunting and fishing opportunities in Kentucky, visit the department website at fw.ky.gov. For questions, please call 1-800-858-1549, 8 a.m.-4:30 p.m. (ET) weekdays, excluding holidays.

— Submitted

Kentucky Office of Agricultural Policy sets March meetings

The following meetings in March involving the Kentucky Office of Agricultural Policy will take place in person.

FRIDAY, MARCH 14

The Kentucky Agricultural Finance Corp. (KAFC) Loan Review Committee will meet at 9 a.m. EDT at the Franklin County Extension Office, 101 Lakeview Court in Frankfort.

KAFC will have its monthly business meeting at 10 a.m. EDT at the Franklin County Extension Office.

FRIDAY, MARCH 21

The Kentucky Agricultural Development Board (KADB) will have its monthly business meeting at 9 a.m. EDT in person at the Franklin County Extension Office, 101 Lakeview Court in Frankfort.

KADB Application Review and Compliance Committee will meet immediately following the adjournment of KADB monthly business meeting.

— Submitted

www.breckheraldnews.com

MONEY FOR ON-FARM IMPROVEMENTS AVAILABLE...



Breckinridge County Conservation District
1101 S. Hwy. 261, Suite 102
Hardinsburg, KY 40143
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BreckCCD@outlook.com

COUNTY AGRICULTURAL INCENTIVES PROGRAM (CAIP)

Applications will be available for Breckinridge County’s CAIP to assist farmers in completing on-farm improvements.

Application Period:
February 19 – March 26, 2025
No applications will be accepted after March 26, 2025.

Application Availability:
Breckinridge County Conservation District
Monday – Friday (7:00 a.m. – 3:30 p.m.)

For More Information:
Contact Marti Janes at 270-756-1696 ext. 3014 or email BreckCCD@outlook.com.

All applications are scored, based on the scoring criteria set by the Kentucky Agricultural Development Board.

UPI-Market Report 3/3/25

Receipts: 716 Last Reported: 612 Year Ago: 789
Compared to last week: Feeder steers and feeder heifers sold 5.00 to 8.00 higher. with instances of sharply higher. Slaughter cows and slaughter bulls sold steady. Supply included: 85% Feeder Cattle (23% Steers, 49% Heifers, 27% Bulls); 14% Slaughter Cattle (76% Cows, 24% Bulls); 1% Replacement Cattle (20% Stock Cows, 60% Bred Cows, 20% Cow-Calf Pairs). Feeder cattle supply over 600 lbs was 25%. STEERS - Med. & Lrg. 1-2: 320 to 396 lbs. \$385 - \$455. 400 to 470 lbs. \$305 - \$390. 500 to 596 lbs. \$302 - \$330. 630 to 684 lbs. \$286 - \$385. HEIFERS - Med. & Lrg. 1-2: 265 to 272 lbs. \$320 - \$335. 310 to 392 lbs. \$300 - \$375. 418 to 495 lbs. \$290 - \$340. 535 to 583 lbs. \$265 - \$287. 607 to 775 lbs. \$235 - \$277. COWS - Breaker 75 - 80%: 1730 lbs. \$128. Boner 80 - 85% 1055 to 1635 lbs. \$90 - \$147. STOCK COWS: Med. & Lrg. Age 2 to 4, 870 lbs. \$132. BRED COWS - Med. & Lrg. Age 5-8 T2, 805 to 1200 lbs. \$1950. COW-CALF PAIRS - Med. & Lrg 1-2 1920 lbs - \$2300.



This report reflects the majority of the cattle sold with a USDA grade, weight, & sex. This report does not reflect all animals sold on the above date.