



# Cervidae Health Research Initiative

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## Introduction to CHeRI: Our Mission

Scientists at the University of Florida Cervidae Health Research Initiative, or CHeRI for short, are working together to tackle problems that affect cervids: members of the deer family like white-tailed deer and elk. ***This initiative seeks to promote interdisciplinary science, education and outreach that increase the health and production of captive cervids in a sustainable manner and promotes the health of native wildlife and the ecosystems in which they live.***

Our stakeholders in the deer farm industry have identified hemorrhagic disease as the primary threat to economic success in Florida. Last year deer farmers lost >\$32M due to a high prevalence of EHD. More information on hemorrhagic disease and the viruses that cause this disease in deer can be found on the CHeRI website. While reducing morbidity and mortality of captive deer from HD is our primary goal, we seek to maintain a diverse portfolio of projects to improve the health of cervids in Florida.

## Message from the Director: Dr. Samantha Wisely

Welcome to our inaugural CHeRI newsletter. With this publication, we hope to keep you updated with the latest news about deer health, ongoing research efforts in CHeRI, and introductions to our fantastic group of faculty, students, and bioscientists who are dedicated to improving deer health in Florida.

I must first thank you for all of your efforts in restoring our funding to the 2016-2017 Florida legislative budget. Your calls to legislators were essential to restoring funding. I must also thank Mr. Derek Whitis for his tireless behind-the-scenes efforts at initiating this funding source and making sure that it remains in place.

It was wonderful to meet many of you at the Southeast Trophy Deer Association's Spring Fling. We hope to continue our dialogue with you as we move forward with research and education into deer health. We will work to implement as many of your suggestions as we can into our program. We want you to feel that this is a shared opportunity to improve deer health in Florida.



**About the Director:** Dr. Samantha Wisely joined the faculty at the University of Florida's Department of Wildlife Ecology & Conservation in 2012. Prior to that, she was on the faculty at Kansas State University for 8 years. She is a wildlife ecologist who studies how wildlife interacts with the environment to create healthy ecosystems. Research projects have included wild hog health and ecology, the spread of rabies in the Great Plains, and production diseases shared by cattle and wildlife.

## Deer Health News

In February of this year, researchers discovered the reason why mule deer populations from Wyoming were declining -- Adenovirus Hemorrhagic Disease (AHD). This disease was discovered in black-tailed deer from California in 1994 and has since been found in Oregon and Wyoming. The disease causes up to a 90% mortality in fawns and 20% mortality in adults. Symptoms mimic that of EHD, with lesions around the mouth and throat and pneumonia-like symptoms. From ProMed Archive Number: 20160208.4003921.

### Free Diagnostic Testing!

If you own a deer farm in Florida, we would like to test sick or dead animals that you suspect have Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease or Bluetongue. We will provide necropsy results for free and those results will be completely confidential. This effort will help our researchers determine which HD viruses are circulating in different areas of Florida, will provide information on important coinfections that may increase mortality, and ultimately will help us develop new and better vaccines for HD.

If you have a dead or sick animal, there are several ways you can get us samples:

- 1) If you work with a veterinarian, we can negotiate a reimbursement rate for providing us with the needed tissues.
- 2) If you have a cold room and can keep the carcass cold, but do not want to necropsy the animal, we can send someone out to collect tissues.
- 3) If you would like to collect tissues yourself, we can provide directions and will have an instructional video coming out soon!

### Call our Hotline: 352-562-DEER



Team Midge: Our crew of entomological students, postdocs and technicians from the UF IFAS Florida Medical Entomology Lab collecting *Culicoides* midges on a ranch in 2015.

### Contact Us:

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