



**UF | IFAS**  
UNIVERSITY of FLORIDA

# CERVIDAE HEALTH RESEARCH INITIATIVE

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## Message from the Director

Happy 2017! We had a productive year working with all of our affiliate deer farmers last year. Our interactions with deer farmers around the state have informed our new 5 year Strategic Plan that will provide a roadmap to our mission at CHeRI. Together we have already learned many things about EHD, deer health and Culicoides ecology. One of our most surprising findings is that more than half of does and bucks suspected of having epizootic hemorrhagic disease (EHD) did not have the disease, but instead had pneumonia or sepsis without viral infection. It is our vision for 2017, that as we continue our research on an efficacious vaccine for the EHD virus, we can reduce other sources of mortality that are treatable but not routinely recognized. We have several new initiatives to help the deer farm industry. We are working with UF IFAS County Extension Agents to help deer farmers identify disease symptoms and spread the word about our free diagnostic services. Our Wildlife Extension Veterinarian will begin working with farmers, and we have workshops and education materials that we will roll out throughout the year on issues that affect deer farmers. Have suggestions? Please send them our way!



Thank you, always, for your support - *Sam*

Dr. Samantha Wisely  
Director, CHeRI

## Newport Vaccine does not produce antibodies against EHDV

Many deer farmers in Florida use Newport Lab's Cervid vaccine for protection against EHD virus and bluetongue virus (BTV). We tested their autogenous vaccine developed for non-adjacent herds and found that vaccinated animals produced no more of an antibody response than unvaccinated deer. These findings are one piece of the puzzle in finding a vaccine for EHD. Read the full report on our [website](#).

Photo: Senior Biological Scientist, Carisa Boyce, is processing blood samples on a deer farm for our ongoing vaccine studies.

## Student Spotlight: Katie Pothier



Katie is a graduate student in the Dept. of Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at UF working on the CHeRI project. Katie's research will help us understand how gut bacteria contribute to the health of deer. To do this, Katie compares networks of bacterial communities in the gastrointestinal tract of healthy vs. sick white tailed deer to understand drivers of disease. These data are collected from fecal swabs, which then have the bacterial DNA extracted, amplified, and run through next generation DNA sequencing to determine which bacteria are present in the sample. Katie also coordinates deer necropsies with deer farmers throughout the state of Florida and ensures that the tissues are collected, stored and transported appropriately. This task is no small feat: for each necropsy, she sends tissues off for 30 different analyses at labs throughout UF.

Katie received her bachelors of science from the University of New Hampshire in 2016, and is currently in the second semester of her masters. At UNH, Katie earned her degree in biomedical science with a concentration in veterinary pathology. She worked under Dr. Inga Sidor in the NH Veterinary Diagnostic Lab doing necropsy on both wild and domestic animals. Her interests include transmission, proliferation, and networking of bacterial and viral pathogens within a host species. Since moving to Florida in May, Katie's other interests include exploring Gainesville and the surrounding areas with her lab mix, Willow.

## New on the Website! – [www.ufl.edu/cheri](http://www.ufl.edu/cheri)

- ***CHeRI Strategic Plan available.*** In order to guide our research and extension priorities for the next 5 years of CHeRI, we have established a Strategic Plan to provide a roadmap to our mission.
- ***Report on efficacy of Newport Vaccine.*** CHeRI researchers compared vaccinated and unvaccinated fawns and found that vaccinate fawns were not protected against EHD.
- ***Factsheet on trueperella.*** More than 10% of fawns and adults died of trueperella this year. This factsheet describes the bacteria, how it is transmitted, and how you can reduce mortalities in your herd.
- ***Update on screwworm in the Keys.*** Screwworm was found on mainland Florida near Homestead in mid January. This is a devastating disease to white-tailed deer. Deer farmers in South Florida, stay alert!

## Upcoming Events

- ***March 28<sup>th</sup> - 1st Annual CHeRI Science Symposium.*** CHeRI scientists will share their findings on disease dynamics, diagnostic tools, deer ecology and midge ecology from deer farms around Florida. Register for the event by clicking [here](#).
- ***April 22 - Southeast Trophy Deer Association Spring Fling.*** CHeRI will have a booth at this annual convention and auction. We will have CHeRI scientists and students on hand to answer your questions. Meet our new Wildlife Extension Veterinarian. Register for the convention [here](#). Come visit us!

## Contact Us:

Email: [wiselylabuf@gmail.com](mailto:wiselylabuf@gmail.com)

EHD Hotline Phone: 352-562-DEER

Website: <http://wec.ufl.edu/cheri/>

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/UFIFAS.CHeRI/>

Twitter: [@UF\\_IFAS\\_CHeRI](https://twitter.com/UF_IFAS_CHeRI)