



Volume 11, Issue 1, March 2026

Message from the Director

It's been a busy beginning of the year. CHeRI held its annual retreat in early January to help keep our research and Extension focused on the science that best supports Florida deer farmers. We have revamped our hemorrhagic disease dashboard so that it tracks outbreaks in real time. We have traveled to New York and New Zealand to help deer farmers maximize production of their herd. And in a few short days we will get a chance to chat and socialize with Florida deer farmers at the annual Southeast Trophy Deer Association Spring Fling. We will see you there!

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

Dr. Samantha Wisely
Director, CHeRI

Advice from Dr. Juan



Fawn Season Is Approaching: Prepare Your Herd for EHDV

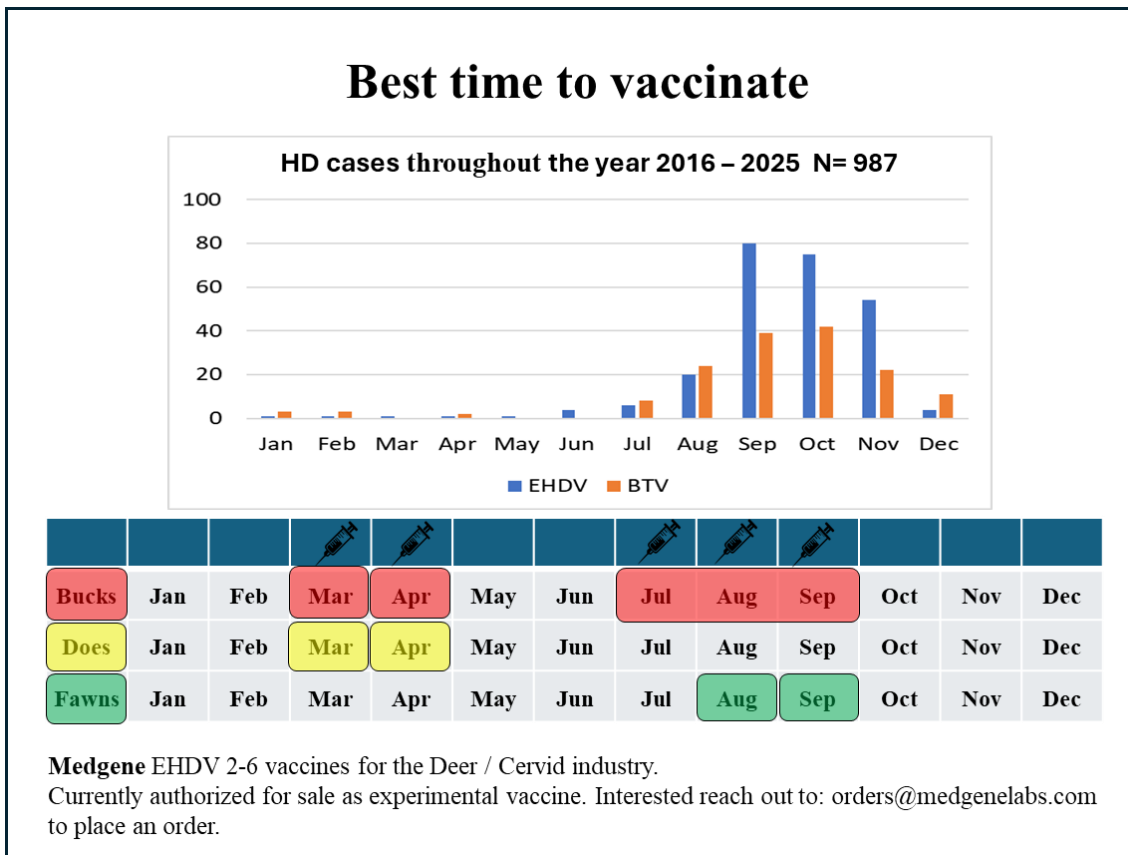
As fawn season approaches in Florida, it's important to prioritize the protection of the next generation of your deer herd. One of the key steps you can take is to prepare for epizootic hemorrhagic disease virus (EHDV), which can significantly affect young, immunologically naïve fawns as well as adult deer.

Maternal antibodies play a critical role in early fawn survival. When does are vaccinated ahead of fawning, they have time to develop antibodies and pass this protection to their fawns through colostrum. This early immune support can make a major difference during the first months of life, when fawns are most vulnerable.

Planning vaccinations now allows adequate time for immunity to develop before the fawning season and peak vector activity in Florida. Remember, Vaccination timing during gestation is important to maximize protection while minimizing risk to both the doe and the developing fawn. Vaccinating too early in gestation may result in antibody levels declining before fawning, reducing the amount of protection passed to the fawn through colostrum. On the other hand, vaccinating too late in gestation may not allow enough time for the doe to mount a strong immune response and transfer adequate maternal antibodies, and late-term handling can increase stress at a critical period of fetal development. The optimal window for vaccination is typically mid-gestation, when the doe is physiologically stable, stress tolerance is higher, and there is sufficient time for robust antibody production and transfer to the fawn.

It is also an ideal time to focus on vaccinating bucks. Early vaccination gives bucks sufficient time to build a strong, effective immune defense against EHDV before disease pressure increases. This is especially important for bucks that may be transported or moved to a new hunting preserve in the coming months, as stress from handling, transport, and new environments can increase susceptibility to disease.

Proactive vaccination of both does and bucks helps protect valuable animals, supports overall herd health, and reduces the risk of losses during the EHD season. A little preparation now can go a long way toward improving fawn survival and providing peace of mind later in the year, when disease pressure is highest.




Here is a suggested vaccination schedule for EHDV in your herd. The Medgene vaccine covers two EHDV serotypes: 2 and 6. Always follow the manufacturer's instructions for any vaccine you use.



By: Dr. Juan M. Campos Krauer

We Launched a New [CHeRI Dashboard Map!](#)

Cervidae Health Research Initiative



The Cervidae Health Research Initiative (CHeRI) offers necropsy and diagnostic services free of charge to Florida deer farmers. Out of state farmers, please call for information: 352-562-DEER.

Our veterinary team is always ready to help deer farmers diagnose the diseases affecting their herds. This dashboard displays the cases of **Bluetongue Virus (BTV)** and **Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease virus (EHDV)** detected from White-tailed Deer in Florida. These two hemorrhagic diseases are the leading cause of death for farmed white-tailed deer.


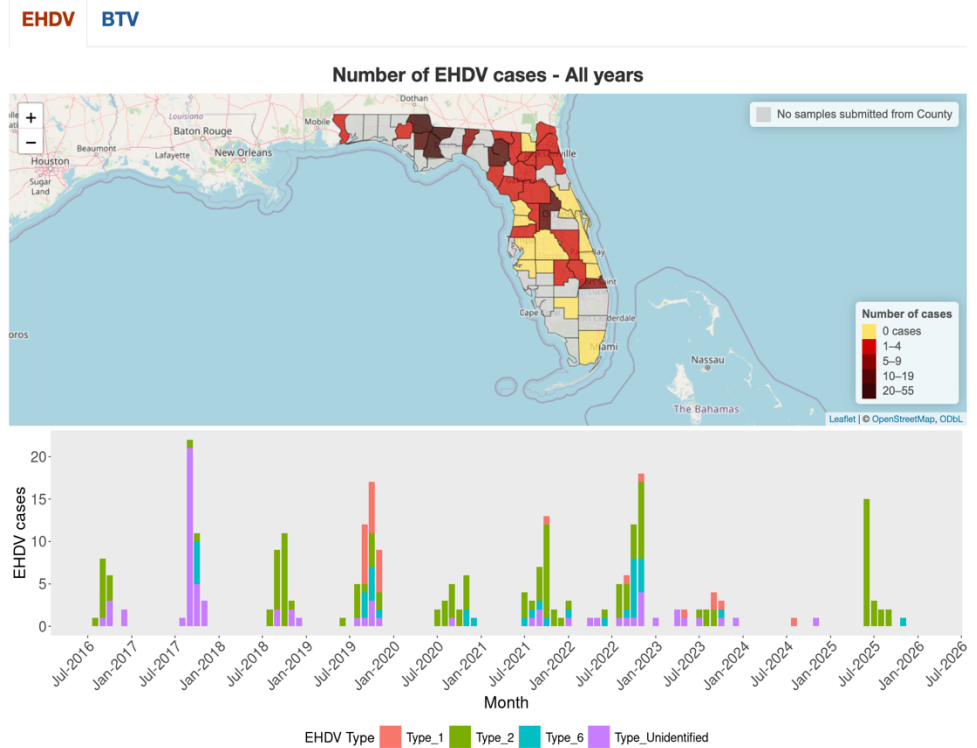
Select the year of interest:

All years

Submissions All years	BTV Cases All years	EHDV Cases All years
1159	193	256

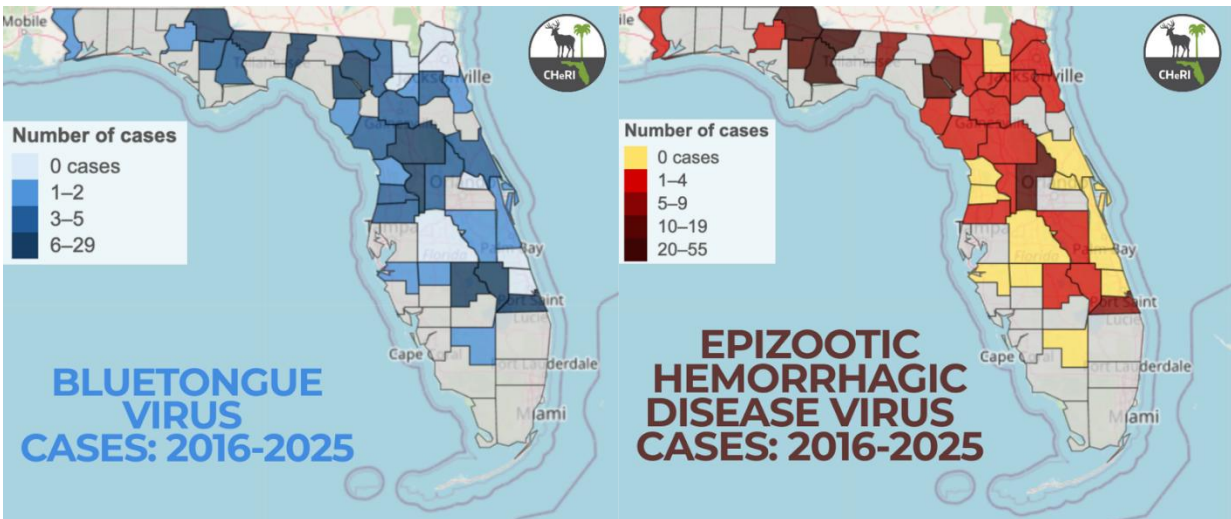
Follow us on social media and stay connected!

[Facebook](#)
[X](#)
[Bluesky](#)
<https://wec.ifas.ufl.edu/cheri/>

Dashboard Map

Our new CHeRI dashboard map is officially live! You can now explore hemorrhagic disease cases across Florida in real time, and track the prevalence of Bluetongue Virus (BTV) and Epizootic Hemorrhagic Disease (EHDV) over the years. The tool also allows you to filter data by specific counties for a more localized view. A new feature of our dashboard includes serotype information for EHDV.



CHeRI Out and About



CHeRI Retreat in January 2026 – To start out the new year, CHeRI scientists, students, and staff gathered in St. Petersburg, FL, for their annual Researcher Retreat held from January 14–16, 2026. This kickoff event provided the perfect environment for the team to share updates on current research, analyze shifting industry trends, and outline future projects tailored to the needs of farmers. It was an energizing way to get the entire CHeRI herd together to strategize for the year ahead!



CHeRI goes to New Zealand – Our CHeRI team represented Florida in Dunedin, New Zealand in February for the 11th International Deer Biology Congress ! Cervid researchers from all over the world shared research, management techniques, and best practices. Dr. Wisely got a chance to visit a red deer farm with Shawn Schafer and Troy Zacchini from NADeFA!



CHeRI at the North Florida Outdoor Expo – Our CHeRI team attended and tabled for the North Florida Outdoor Expo on February 22nd. As CHeRI plays a vital role in protecting Florida's deer farming industry, they informed the public about what CHeRI does. We provided a deeper understanding of deer farming to Floridians and shared some of our CHeRI swag!



CHeRI at the Reindeer Farmers Association – Dr. Juan Campos attended the 2026 Annual Meeting for the Reindeer Farmers Association from February 20th to February 22nd. The meeting was held in Rochester, New York. There were presentations and sessions that covered everything from fencing and farm setup to veterinary care. Reindeer farmers were hit hard this year by EHDV and wanted advice from CHeRI on how to manage this disease.



Reindeer Farmers Association Annual Meeting 2026

Upcoming Events



SeTDA Spring Fling, March 6-7, 2026
 Mark your calendars! 2026 SeTDA Spring Fling will happen next March 6-7, 2026, in Orlando! CHeRI will be there with a booth and many of our scientists will be attending.



NADeFA Conference, March 18-21, 2026

NADeFA is March 18-21 this year. Dr. Sam and Dr. Juan will be there. Come visit us at our booth!

CHeRI Spotlight!

Andy Williams - PhD Candidate



My background spans diverse career fields. I spent 10 years working in Civil Engineering as a site designer and inspector. I then made a complete career shift into the medical field. I earned my bachelor's degree from Santa Fe College in Gainesville, Florida. After several years working in the hospital laboratory and Emergency Department, I attended the University of Florida, where I graduated with a master's degree in Environmental and Global Health, focusing on One Health. Following graduation, I was determined to pursue further education and began a PhD in One Health. As a father of three young boys, I dedicate my time to hunting, fishing, playing sports, and teaching the importance of conserving our natural resources.

As a research assistant at Lednicky Laboratory, I bring virology expertise to CHeRI. I isolate and help identify viruses impacting White-Tailed Deer in Florida. My future goal is to identify all clinically significant viruses that threaten these deer in the region.

Meet our new CHeRI members!



Kyra English

Hi everyone! I am a research coordinator in Dr. Wisely's lab and have had the opportunity to get involved with CHeRI by assisting with event logistics and hemorrhagic disease testing. I was born and raised in central Florida and completed my bachelor's and Master's in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation at the University of Florida.



Jaylene Velasquez-Salguero

Hello everyone! I am a science communicator and lab technician for CHeRI. I earned my Bachelor of Science in Wildlife Ecology and Conservation from the University of Florida in Fall 2025. As CHeRI's science communicator, I work to translate research findings into graphics and visual summaries.



Sebastian Botero-Cañola

I am a wildlife ecologist interested in how environmental conditions shape the interactions between vertebrates and their parasites. My work integrates field research, laboratory work,



Monalisa Lima

I am a veterinarian with a Master's degree in Preventative Veterinary Medicine from the University of Florida (UF/IFAS). I specialize in Epidemiology and population health, and I am

and statistical modeling to understand when and where diseases are most likely to emerge in wildlife, livestock, and people. I joined CHeRI this year to support the analysis of deer disease data and help generate insights that can inform management and decision-making.

passionate about veterinary medicine, biosafety, animal welfare, and monitoring emerging diseases in animal populations. As a member of the CHeRI team, I contribute to necropsy investigators, disease surveillance, and the diagnosis of infectious diseases in cervids.

Ship us your specimens!

Are you experiencing an abnormal level of mortality of deer on your farm? Are you outside of Florida or want to necropsy your animal yourself? You can ship us samples for testing. We accept biological samples from live and dead animals, but it's critically important that the samples are collected, stored, and shipped correctly. Improperly prepared samples yield poor or no results. Call us prior to collecting specimens to determine which sample(s) to collect and how to store it. We will work with your veterinarian or your farm manager to ensure that the right sample is collected. Proper shipping and notification will ensure your sample stays viable for testing and that no cost is incurred by the shipper.

Call [352-562-3337](tel:352-562-3337) if you have any questions about requirements when sending CHeRI a specimen.

And remember, if your farm is in Florida, we will come to your farm, perform a necropsy on the deceased animal, and provide diagnostic results for free! All results are confidential.

Contact Us:

Email: ufifas.cheri@gmail.com
HD Hotline Phone: 352-562-DEER
Website: <http://wec.ifas.ufl.edu/cheri/>
Facebook: [@UFIFAS.CHeRI](https://www.facebook.com/UFIFAS.CHeRI)
X: [@UF_IFAS_CHeRI](https://twitter.com/UF_IFAS_CHeRI)
Bluesky: [@ufifas-cheri.bsky.social](https://bsky.app/profile/ufifas-cheri.bsky.social)

Cervidae Health Research Initiative

Increase the Health of Your Whitetails

CHeRI Diagnostic Services

- Detection of EHDV or BTV in your deer
- Serotyping of EHDV (1, 2, or 6) in deer
- Consultation with Extension veterinarian
- Free for Florida farmers
- For out-of-state farmers, contact us for pricing



University of Florida | IFAS

Disease Testing
wec.ifas.ufl.edu/CHeRI/
ufifas.cheri@gmail.com

(352) 562 - DEER

UF IFAS Extension
UNIVERSITY OF FLORIDA

