



MAINE DEPARTMENT OF INLAND FISHERIES & WILDLIFE

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Department Detects Elevated Levels of PFAS in Deer Harvested in Fairfield Area; Issues Do Not Eat Advisory For Deer Harvested There

AUGUSTA, Maine -- The Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife, in conjunction with the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (Maine CDC), announced today that it has detected high levels of PFAS (Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances) in some deer harvested in the [greater Fairfield area](#), and is issuing a do not eat advisory for deer harvested in the area.

After consulting with the Maine CDC and the Department of Environmental Protection, MDIFW harvested deer in the area of several contaminated farm fields in Fairfield and tested them for PFAS. Five out of the eight deer tested were taken in close proximity to fields that had extremely high PFAS levels, and those deer had levels high enough in their meat to warrant a recommendation not to eat more than two or three meals in a year. Three other deer were tested from fields with lower PFAS levels that were two miles away, and these deer had lower PFAS levels but still high enough to warrant a recommendation to eat less than one meal per week.

After discussions with the Maine CDC, and out of an abundance of caution, the Department decided to place a [do not eat advisory for all deer in the area of the Fairfield sites](#), even though PFAS levels were lower in deer further away from the site with the highest concentration of PFAS.

This [advisory area](#) encompasses multiple farm fields that have been contaminated by high levels of PFAS through the spreading of municipal and/or industrial sludge for fertilizer that contained PFAS. Deer feeding in these contaminated areas have ingested these chemicals, and now have PFAS in their meat and organs.

“Recent testing of deer harvested in the area show elevated levels of PFAS in both the meat and liver of deer,” said MDIFW Commissioner Judy Camuso. “We take the elevated levels seriously and advise people not to eat deer that were harvested in these areas.”

Per- and Polyfluoroalkyl substances (PFAS) have been used for decades in a variety of household and consumer products, including non-stick cookware, carpet, waterproof clothing, and food packaging products such as pizza boxes and microwave popcorn bags.

Known as “forever chemicals” since they are very slow to break down, PFAS persist in the environment and are found in soil, water, plants, and animals. Over time, exposure to these chemicals have been known to increase the risk of some types of cancer, elevate blood pressure during pregnancy, can cause liver and kidney problems, and can impair the immune system.

PFAS in the Fairfield area were first discovered through the routine testing of milk samples, which revealed high levels at a Fairfield dairy farm. Since that time, increased testing has revealed multiple fields, farms, wells and waters in the area that have elevated high-levels of PFAS.

[The Fairfield advisory area begins \(click here for map\)](#) at the Carter Memorial Bridge in Waterville where Route 137 crosses the Kennebec, heads north up the Kennebec River past Waterville and Skowhegan, to

the Eugene Cole Bridge in Norridgewock (Route 8 and 201A), then south from Norridgewock along Route 8 into Smithfield to the intersection of Routes 8 and 137, then south on Route 137 until it crosses the Kennebec River on the Carter Memorial Bridge. Hunters who have already harvested a deer in the area are advised not to eat the deer and to dispose of the deer in their trash or landfill. The department will offer those who harvested a deer in the advisory area an opportunity to take an additional deer in the 2022 hunting season. Hunters should call the department at 207-287-8000 for more information.

If you have questions about possible health effects from eating deer harvested in the advisory area, please contact a toxicologist at the Maine Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) at 866-292-3474 (toll-free in Maine) or 207-287-4311.

The Department plans to continue to work with the Maine CDC, Maine Department of Environmental Protection, and the Maine Department of Agriculture, Conservation and Forestry concerning PFAS and testing. The Department will continue to test deer, and other wildlife in the area and beyond, to try and determine the extent of PFAS in Maine's wildlife.

Maine joins New Hampshire, Michigan and Wisconsin as states that have issued consumption advisories concerning PFAS and deer. New Hampshire and Wisconsin's advisories are for non-consumption of the liver, and does not include meat.

For more information on PFAS, please visit the Maine DEP PFAS informational page (<https://www.maine.gov/dep/spills/topics/pfas/index.html>), or the Maine CDC informational page (<https://www1.maine.gov/dep/spills/topics/pfas/Maine-CDC-PFOS-PFOA-Exposure-Factsheet-09.23.2020.pdf>)

If you have more questions please contact the Maine Department of Inland Fisheries and Wildlife at 207-287-8000, or IFW.PFAS@maine.gov

The Department has also developed a frequently asked question list that you can view at <https://www.maine.gov/ifw/hunting-trapping/hunting-resources/deer/index.html>.

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