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UNIVERSITY OF GEORGIA
Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study

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STUDY SHOWS COSTLY CATTLE DISEASE NOT IN SOUTHEAST WHITETAIL DEER

Whitetail deer have been eliminated as likely carriers of the dread cattle disease, anaplasmosis, according to an announcement today by the Southeastern Cooperative Wildlife Disease Study and the Department of the Interior's Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife. The conclusion is based on investigations by the research group which has headquarters at the University of Georgia's School of Veterinary Medicine at Athens.

Anaplasmosis causes an annual loss of up to $40 million to livestock farmers, and reports from some areas of the country have indicated that deer are potential carriers of the disease.

The Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife sponsored a $44,000 research program to investigate anaplasmosis under field conditions.

Laboratory aspects of the study were carried out at the Georgia Coastal Plain Experiment Station at Tifton, Georgia.

Researchers collected 269 deer blood specimens with the assistance of Game and Fish personnel in Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Maryland, Mississippi, South Carolina and Virginia. The studies showed that all the specimens were free of anaplasmosis.

The announcement said whitetail deer have been infected experimentally with the disease, and natural infections sometime occur in related deer species in western states.

The conclusion from studies at Tifton, however, is that whitetail deer of the Southeast, also known as Virginia whitetail deer, are not a threat as carriers of the disease.

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