Key Messages

**2017 NUNAVUT TRICHINELLA DETECTION PILOT PROGRAM**

1. **Purpose of the Pilot Program**

The Pilot program is established to build the capacity to test for Trichinella in Nunavut. To date, five individuals have been trained to carry out the test. We also wish to get a better sense of infection rates in Walrus, this information is currently lacking.

1. **Establishing a Long Term Testing Program**

The Pilot will be evaluated to inform a long-term testing program for the territory. The results of the evaluation will be shared with the Pilot’s partners, this includes the Department of Health and the Department of Environment. The evaluation will be completed by Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. (NTI) and the Nunavut Research Institute (NRI).

1. **Results Reporting**

The Pilot will release both positive and negative results to the harvesting hunter. The hunter will be informed that Kuujjuaq is confirming results obtained in Iqaluit. The choice to wait on Kuujjuaq’s test results is up to the Hunter. An Official from the Department of Health will release results as they become available. A Hunter may be contacted twice.

At the same time, the Hunter is also asked to consent to the release of results to the local Hunters and Trappers Organization.

1. **Building a Facility for Testing**

This is an option moving forward, but no decision has been made a present. We are working with our partners, to establish a permanent detection program. As noted, the evaluation will factor in heavily into partner level discussions.

Nunavut Arctic College has committed NRI lab facilities and resources to support testing through the pilot phase of the program. Retaining the testing capabilities at NRI is one option that will be evaluated assessed in the evaluation of the pilot

1. **Location of Testing**

There is no decision on a permanent location for testing at this time e.g. Iqaluit versus Igloolik. Multiple options will be examined moving forward.

1. **Testing for Other Diseases in Animals**

A resounding priority we are hearing from communities, is to build a permanent testing program in Nunavut, for Trichinella. This is our focus at present.

But moving forward, we recognize it will be important to think more long term, building greater testing capacities in Nunavut, to monitor the health of our animals, as animal health and Inuit health is closely connected.

Notably, this type of test, can be used to test other species for Trichinella. For example, it can be used to test Polar Bear, another natural carrier of this parasite.

1. **Type of Sample Needed for Testing**

Hunters are being asked to provide the whole tongue, this is the ideal body part for the type of test method being used.

1. **Shipment of Tongue to Iqaluit**

You are asked to contact the Hunters and Trappers Organization in your community. They have sampling kits provided by the Department of Health. You are then asked to ship the tongue via your local airline to Iqaluit, please ask that shipment be charged to the local health center account (First Air). A new collection protocol is being developed and will be distributed to all Hunters and Trappers Organizations in the near future.

1. **Involvement of the Nunavik Research Centre**

Yes, the Nunavik Research Centre (NRC) is an important partner in the Pilot. They are also testing the same sample (each tongue is split, with a portion sent to Kuujjuaq), the NRC is ensuring results Iqaluit-based analysts are obtaining are accurate.

They have also been a key support along the way, providing advice to the Pilot and answering questions as they have surfaced.

1. **Illness in Humans**

According to the Department of Health, you could contract Trichinellosis (the illness caused by consuming the worm) by consuming uncooked meat. If a person is infected, you may experience stomach and muscle pain, diarrhea, sweating and weakness. You should let your health care provider know if you experience any of these symptoms after eating uncooked Walrus.

1. **Sample Compensation**

Once you have shipped your sample to Iqaluit and it is obtained, you will be contacted verifying your information and Nunavut Tunngavik Inc. will arrange to pay you for your samples. The method of payment may vary by community.

1. **How long will the Pilot run?**

At present, the Pilot will run from now, until the end of December 2017.  Please note, the partners may consider extending the Pilot into 2018.