



**Antelope Valley Mosquito
& Vector Control District**
42624 6th St. East
Lancaster, CA 93535
(661) 942 – 2917

NEWS RELEASE – **For Immediate Release**

October 20, 2006

Contact:
Karen Mellor, Entomologist
Karen@avmosquito.org
(661) 942 – 2917 ext. 206

New West Nile Virus Cases Despite Cooler Weather

Lancaster, CA – The Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) was informed by the California Department of Health Services Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory (VRDL) that two more sentinel chickens and one dead crow tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). The chickens were from a flock in Lancaster that already had shown WNV activity in the past and is located near 15th Street West and Avenue I. The crow was found in Palmdale near Avenue S and 30th Street East.

“That brings the total number of WNV cases in the Antelope Valley to 12 chickens and four dead birds,” said District Entomologist Karen Mellor. “At this time last year WNV had been detected in 25 sentinel chickens, 11 dead birds, 6 horses and one mosquito sample.”

To date there have been 255 human cases of West Nile Virus with 5 fatalities and it has also been identified in 1298 birds, 816 mosquito samples, 598 chickens, 52 horses and 30 squirrels in 54 Counties in California. Nationwide 47 States have reported West Nile Virus activity with 3498 human cases and 108 fatalities.

“As temperatures are decreasing it is important that residents change their sprinkler settings to come on less often,” District Manager Cei Kratz advised. “That doesn’t only reduce the mosquito population in the runoff water, but will help conserve water and lower your water bill.”

The Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District is asking for help to detect WNV activity by reporting recently deceased birds to the dead bird hotline at 1-877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at www.westnile.ca.gov. West Nile Virus is spread by mosquitoes, which feed on the blood of infected birds and then pass it on to humans or other animals. West Nile Virus is not

spread by person-to-person contact or by handling dead birds. Birds that are not picked up by the end of the day can be safely discarded in the trashcan using gloves, a shovel or an inverted trash bag to handle them.

All residents are urged to take individual responsibility for the protection of their families and animals. Here are a few easy suggestions to reduce mosquitoes in your yard and your neighborhood:

- * Make sure your sprinklers are set in a manner that will allow the ground to dry completely before the next cycle. Conserve water and prevent mosquito breeding.
- * Get rid of standing water – Empty out all small containers at least once a week, keep pools and spas chlorinated or drained, and repair all water leaks.
- * Get FREE mosquito-eating fish (*Gambusia affinis*), if you have sources that cannot be drained (e.g. fish ponds, unused pools, large horse troughs).
- * Wear long sleeved shirts and pants and use CDC recommended mosquito repellents (DEET, Picaridin, Oil of lemon eucalyptus) when outdoors during dusk and dawn. Always follow instructions on the product label.
- * Keep tight fitting screens on doors and windows to prevent mosquitoes from entering homes.
- * Horse owners should make sure their horses are properly vaccinated.
- * Report stagnant pools and other backyard sources to the AVMVCD.

For any further questions or services please feel free to contact the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District by phone (661-942-2917) or check us out online at www.avmosquito.org.