



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

NEWS RELEASE

– For Immediate Release

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Contact:

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

West Nile Virus Found in Palmdale Chickens

Lancaster, CA – The Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) reports that two sentinel chickens in one of their Palmdale coops have tested positive for the mosquito-borne virus. The California Department of Health Services Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory (VRDL) confirmed that blood samples taken from those chickens earlier this month contained antibodies to West Nile Virus (WNV).

“The affected coop is near 20th St. East and Avenue Q in Palmdale. Last year we had positive chickens at this location as well,” said District Entomologist Karen Mellor. “To date the only sign of WNV in Los Angeles County have been in the three sentinel chickens from the Antelope Valley and three mosquito samples from the San Fernando Valley. So far all of the dead birds and mosquitoes samples that we’ve submitted from the AV have tested negative,” she added.

As of 6/16/06 West Nile Virus has only been detected in 28 dead birds, 10 mosquito samples and 3 chickens in 11 Counties in California. No human or horse cases have been reported yet. Only three states (Colorado, Mississippi and Texas) have reported a total of 4 human cases of WNV this year.

“The low number of cases might be due to the weather patterns we have had this spring and the heightened awareness of WNV with more people doing their part in preventing mosquitoes by removing stagnant water and reporting dirty pools in their neighborhood. The more we know about backyard water sources the better we can protect the residents in the AV,” she concluded. “That is always the ‘big unknown’ in our mosquito control efforts. If we don’t know it exists, we can’t treat it, and one green pool can infest a whole entire subdivision with mosquitoes.”

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.