



**Antelope Valley Mosquito
& Vector Control District**
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NEWS RELEASE

– **For Immediate Release**

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West Nile Virus Still Active in the Antelope Valley

Lancaster, CA – The Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) reports that one sentinel chicken at a second Lancaster location has 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 that chicken earlier this month contained antibodies to West Nile Virus (WNV). Additionally two dead crows found in Lancaster last weekend tested positive by VecTest performed by the Los Angeles County Veterinary Public Health Department.

“The positive chicken is from a coop located near 15th Street West and Avenue I in Lancaster,” said District Entomologist Karen Mellor. “Both crows were found off Avenue K, one near 30th St East and the other one near 10th St West. That brings the total number of WNV positive cases in the Antelope Valley to 5 chickens and three dead bird,” she added.

To date there have been 159 human cases with 2 fatalities and the virus has also been identified in 38 horses, 932 birds, 683 mosquito samples and 399 chickens in 51 Counties in California. Nationwide 47 States have reported 1267 human cases with 36 fatalities.

“At this time last year the State had already reported 593 human cases. The decrease in people getting sick is partially due to the heightened awareness of WNV and people doing their part in preventing mosquitoes by using repellents, removing stagnant water and reporting dirty pools in their neighborhood,” she concluded. “We encourage residents to report green pools, so we can treat the mosquitoes in them. Standing water that’s out in the open such as gutters, ditches and retention basins are checked on a weekly basis and don’t need to be reported.”

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.