



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

– **For Immediate Release**

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### **More West Nile Virus Cases Despite the Cooler Weather**

Lancaster, CA –Six horses in the Antelope Valley have tested positive for West Nile virus the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) reports. Two of these horses were from Rosamond, two from Antelope Acres and one each from Quartz Hill and Leona Valley. Three of them died or had to be euthanized because they were too ill to recover. Additionally five of eight flocks of sentinel chickens, four dead birds and one mosquito collection have shown signs of West Nile Virus infection.

“Most people think that the mosquito season is over, since the nighttime temperatures are decreasing,” District Entomologist Karen Mellor said. “Unfortunately we’re not in the clear yet. Residents should still take precautions and make sure to remove all standing water to avoid mosquito production. It is very important to reduce the number of mosquitoes before they go into ‘hibernation’ for the winter to reduce the next generation in early spring.”

The AVMVCD staff has placed an additional flock of sentinel chickens in the newly annexed White Fence Farm area to monitor any virus activity there, especially since there are several properties with horses in that vicinity. Because the incubation time for WNV is 3-14 days District staff expects to see more positives confirmed within the next month or two.

So far this year 753 human cases of West Nile Virus with 16 deaths have been reported in California, and nationwide counts stand at 1512 human cases with 41 deaths. To date it has also been detected in 2534 dead birds, 1174 mosquito pools (a collection of adult mosquitoes), 425 horses and 832 sentinel chickens in 54 Counties in the State.

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. The dead bird surveillance is an early warning system for the range of the virus. The public is asked to help by reporting recently deceased birds (except for pigeons, doves and chickens) by calling 1-877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov).

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 to reduce sprinkler output for fall, when less water is needed. 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 mosquito-eating fish (*Gambusia affinis*) for free, if you have sources that cannot be drained (e.g. fish ponds, 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](http://www.avmosquito.org).