



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

– For Immediate Release

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### **More Chickens Infected in the Antelope Valley**

Lancaster, CA – Two additional sentinel chickens have tested positive for a mosquito-borne virus the Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) reports. The California Department of Health Services Viral and Rickettsial Disease Laboratory (VRDL) has to conduct further tests to determine which virus has infected the chickens. They have detected antibodies to either West Nile Virus (WNV), St. Louis Encephalitis or Western Equine Encephalitis in the blood samples from these chickens.

“This time chicken coops on the eastside of both Lancaster and Palmdale were affected,” District Entomologist Karen Mellor said. “This is the first indication of WNV in Palmdale. Last year all of the positives were in Lancaster. To date the only indicator of WNV we have had in the Antelope Valley have been in sentinel chickens. All of the dead birds and mosquitoes pools that were submitted have tested negative,” she added.

So far this year there have 208 human cases of West Nile Virus with 6 deaths reported in California, which is by far the highest number in the Nation followed by South Dakota and Louisiana with 43 and 36 respectively. To date it has also been detected in 1502 dead birds, 712 mosquito pools (a collection of adult mosquitoes), 213 horses and 169 sentinel chickens in 50 Counties in the State.

The Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District has also just received confirmation that they were awarded a grant of \$139,070 by the state to increase mosquito control efforts in some of the outlying areas of the Antelope Valley and to prepare for a possible attack on adult mosquitoes. “We hope that we don’t have to go that route and that we can keep mosquito populations down using larvicides to kill mosquito larvae in the standing water, but we need to prepare for the worst,”

she concluded. “Adulticiding is the last resort, when everything else has failed. But if we have an epidemic these extra funds will enable us to bring out the big guns.”

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 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 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).