

Longhorned Ticks in New Jersey

In late 2017, animal health and tick experts in New Jersey identified a longhorned tick (*Haemaphysalis longicornis*) on a sheep in Hunterdon County. These ticks are native to east Asia and were not previously confirmed in the U.S. Following this finding, animal health officials began examining how and when the tick arrived here. As part of these efforts, they reexamined tick samples from past years. NVSL received and confirmed a longhorned tick from 2013.

Since the initial finding in 2017, longhorned ticks have been found in Hunterdon, Union, Mercer and Middlesex counties in New Jersey. The tick had been confirmed in several other states infesting a number of animal hosts including sheep, goats, dogs, horses, cattle, deer, opossums and raccoons.

The introduction of a new tick species in the United States is rare. It remains unknown how the longhorned tick first entered the country. Some possible routes of entry include entering on domestic pets, horses, livestock or humans.

Why We Are Concerned

The longhorned tick may pose a risk to New Jersey livestock. The tick can feed on many types of animals. It is an aggressive biter. If too many ticks attach to one animal, the loss of blood can kill the animal. Ticks can also spread a variety of diseases.

The longhorned tick can reproduce without a male. A single female tick can create a population in a new location.

What We Are Doing

Animal health officials treated properties and domestic animals living where longhorned ticks were found in order to kill the ticks. We are assessing ticks from livestock, wildlife, and pets throughout the State to see if the longhorned tick spread to new areas. Our primary goal is to prevent further tick spread and to educate animal owners and veterinarians about the tick, including how to protect animals and properties from tick infestation.

What You Can Do

The adult longhorned tick is dark brown in color and grows to the size of a pea when it is full of blood. The other life stages of the tick are very small and difficult to see with the naked eye.



(longhorned tick, adult)



(longhorned tick, full of blood)

Prevent Ticks

If you own pets or livestock, ask your veterinarian about tick prevention methods to protect your animals from the Longhorned tick. Tick products licensed in the US are currently thought to be effective against the Longhorned tick. Your local Rutgers Cooperative Extension Service office can give you tips on how to control ticks on your property.

Collect Ticks

If you find suspected Longhorned ticks on you, your pets, horses, livestock, or hunter-harvested wildlife, please collect the tick for animal health officials to identify. To collect ticks:

- Place the tick in a snack or sandwich-sized zip-top bag along with a small postage stamp size piece of moistened paper towel, napkin, or tissue. Zip the bag closed.
- Visit the NJ Department of Agriculture, Division of Animal Health website <http://www.state.nj.us/agriculture/divisions/ah/> to find the tick collection sites in your county and print out a submission form.
- Fill out the form, put the form and the small bag with the tick in it inside a larger zip-top bag. Zip the larger bag closed.
- Take the larger bag to a county collection site.

You will only be notified if the tick you submitted is a longhorned tick.

Report Ticks

If you see livestock, pets, horses, or wild animals with heavy tick infestations (e.g. ears are covered with ticks of different sizes), call the New Jersey Tick Line at **1-833-NEW-TICK** (1-833-639-8425).

For More Information

For additional information about the longhorned tick in New Jersey, visit:
<http://www.nj.gov/agriculture/news/hottopics/topics171123.html>