



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

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For Immediate Release

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**Contact:**

Cei Kratz – District Manager  
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### **First Chicken Confirmed Positive for West Nile Virus in Lancaster**

Lancaster, CA – The Antelope Valley Mosquito & Vector Control District (AVMVCD) has received confirmation that a blood sample from a chicken in Lancaster has tested positive for West Nile Virus (WNV). The chicken is part of a flock located near 45<sup>th</sup> Street East and Ave J. The District has 8 flocks of sentinel chickens that are placed throughout the Antelope Valley to detect mosquito-borne viruses such as WNV, St. Louis Encephalitis and Western Equine Encephalitis.

This is the first chicken in Los Angeles County to show a WNV infection. So far this year the virus activity has been slower than in the last few years in southern California, although some areas have higher numbers than last year. The majority of action this year has been in the Bay area and Central Valley. Two dead birds that were found in Quartz Hill earlier this year have also tested positive to previous West Nile Virus infections.

“This serves as a reminder that the virus is still active and that we need to stay vigilant to protect ourselves against it,” District Manager Cei Kratz said. “We want everybody to enjoy the Antelope Valley Fair without worries, so we advise they use mosquito repellent while there.” The Center for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommends using repellents that contain DEET, Picaridin, oil of lemon eucalyptus, or IR3535. These are proven to be effective and safe if used according to the directions.

As of today West Nile Virus has been found in 28 Counties in 676 mosquito samples, 231 birds, 51 chickens, 11 tree squirrels, 4 horses, and 22 human cases. Last year at this time, 35 Counties showed signs of the virus in 503 mosquito samples, 299 birds, 56 chickens, 2 tree squirrels, 3 horses, and 10 human cases.

West Nile Virus is transmitted by the bite of an infected mosquito. Although most people that are infected do not show any symptoms, West Nile Virus is a potentially debilitating disease. Even 'mild' cases of West Nile Fever can cause patients enormous pain and discomfort for months.

Residents are encouraged to continue reporting any dead birds to the California West Nile Virus Hotline at 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473) or online at [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov). Not all birds will be tested, but the data of dead bird clusters is vital in tracking and controlling the virus.

District officials urge residents to take individual responsibility, and remember the 3 D's protect yourself and your family from West Nile Virus:

- \* DRAIN all standing water – Empty out small containers at least once a week, keep pools and spas chlorinated or drained, and repair all water leaks. Conserve water and prevent mosquito breeding.
- \* DUSK and DAWN – are peak activity times for mosquitoes.
- \* DEFEND yourself - wear long sleeved shirts and pants and use mosquito repellents containing DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus, or IR3535 when outdoors during mosquito activity. Always follow instructions on the product label. Keep tight fitting screens on doors and windows to prevent mosquitoes from entering homes.

Also remember to:

- \* get FREE mosquito-eating fish (*Gambusia affinis*) for fish ponds, pools, and horse troughs.
- \* vaccinate your horses properly.
- \* report stagnant pools and other backyard sources to the AVMVCD.
- \* report dead birds by calling 1-877-WNV-BIRD (877-968-2473) or online at [www.westnile.ca.gov](http://www.westnile.ca.gov).

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).