



MARIN/SONOMA MOSQUITO AND VECTOR CONTROL DISTRICT

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~ News Release ~

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

WEST NILE VIRUS FOUND IN SONOMA COUNTY HORSE

(Cotati), California September 16th, 2004 the presence of West Nile Virus (WNV) has been detected in a Sonoma county horse. WNV is a viral disease of birds that can be transmitted to humans and other animals by a mosquito that has fed on an infected bird.

On September 16, 2004, The **Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District** received notification from the California State Health Department of our first positive equine case of West Nile Virus. The sample was collected on September 13. The 17 year old quarter horse resided in South West Santa Rosa, was unvaccinated, and was subsequently euthanized.. The detection of WNV in wild birds and now horses indicates the virus is present, increasing the risk that mosquitoes can transmit WNV to humans. No human cases or mosquito pools have been reported positive at this time.

Symptoms of WNV range from mild flu-like conditions, such as fever, headache, and nausea to a stiff neck, restlessness, stupor, delirium, and convulsions. Most cases are mild; however, fatalities can occur in extreme cases. There is no vaccine for WNV.

The **Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District** recommends that residents take a few simple precautions to protect themselves and their children from mosquito bites:

- X Avoid being outside when mosquitoes are most active, between dusk and dawn.
- X When engaging in outdoor activities, wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, and apply insect repellent according to label instructions. Products containing the active ingredient DEET have been proven to be the most effective.
- X Screen all windows and make sure the screens are in good repair.
- X Identify and eliminate all sources of standing water around your property that can support mosquito breeding.
- X Remove water from rain gutters, boat covers, tires, tree holes, plastic containers, and any other areas that contain standing water.
- X Report dead crows, ravens, magpies, jays and raptors that have been dead for less than 24 hrs. The toll-free line to report dead birds is 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473).
- X Horses are susceptible to mosquito-borne viruses and should be vaccinated.
- X For more mosquito control ideas, or to report unusual mosquito activity, contact the District at **(707-285-2200)** for more information.