



## MARIN/SONOMA MOSQUITO AND VECTOR CONTROL DISTRICT

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### ~ News Release ~

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#### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

### **Two Sentinel Chickens Test Positive For West Nile Virus**

(**Cotati**), California September 22nd, 2006 the presence of West Nile Virus (WNV) has been detected in Marin County again. WNV is a viral disease of birds that can be transmitted to humans by a mosquito that has fed on an infected bird.

Two birds in a sentinel chicken flock located in Novato have tested positive for WNV in Marin by the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District in cooperation with the California State Health Department. The sentinel chickens were confirmed positive on 09/22/06. Sentinel chicken flocks are used as an “early warning” system to detect the presence of mosquito borne diseases. Currently there are seven flocks of ten chickens disbursed throughout the two counties. Blood samples are taken every two weeks; April through the beginning of November. If antibodies appear in the blood of the chickens, it shows they were recently bitten by infected mosquitoes. This is an indication that the virus is in a localized area. The District is checking all known mosquito breeding sites and setting adult mosquito traps in the areas where the birds were located. “Although we are coming to the end of WNV season both Marin and Sonoma Counties have seen a marked increase in WNV activity over the past three weeks” said Chris Canterbury, Public Relations Director for the Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District. He also urged residents to not let their guard down on personal protection measures such as wearing protective clothing and repellents and continually checking their properties for standing water. Most importantly, residents

should report any mosquito breeding sites to the District at 707-285-2200.

**This year, 15 birds have tested positive for West Nile Virus in Marin and Sonoma Counties (10 in Sonoma County and 5 in Marin County) along with 1 Western Gray Squirrel in Marin County, 1 mosquito pool in Marin County; 2 horse deaths (1 in Sonoma County and 1 in Marin County), 1 human case in Marin County and two sentinel chickens in Marin County. The detection of WNV in wild birds, squirrels, horses, sentinel chickens and mosquitoes indicates the virus is present in both counties.**

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. The Marin/Sonoma Mosquito and Vector Control District along with Dr. Fred Schwartz, Marin County Public Health Officer and Dr. Leigh Hall, Sonoma County Deputy Health Officer are reminding citizens to take these protective measures:

- Avoid being outside when mosquitoes are most active, between dusk and dawn.
- 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 or Picaridin are the most effective, while oil of lemon eucalyptus is another option.
- Screen all windows and make sure the screens are in good repair.
- Cover septic tanks and screen roof vent pipes.
- Identify and eliminate all sources of standing water around your property.
- Remove water from rain gutters, boat covers, tires, tree holes, plastic containers.
- Report dead birds.

Online reporting is preferred at <http://westnile.ca.gov>. The toll-free line to report a dead bird is 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473).