

State Veterinarian's Office Update on Equine WNV:

9-14-15

Eleven WNV-positive cases diagnosed in Colorado during 2015

Eleven equine cases of West Nile Virus (WNV) have been diagnosed in Colorado in nine Colorado counties as of September 14th, 2015. The WNV positive horses are from Alamosa, Boulder, Broomfield, Conejos, Fremont, Jefferson, Larimer, Park, and Weld counties.

The incidence of WNV disease varies from year to year and depends on a number of factors, including mosquito numbers. The West Nile virus can be carried by infected birds and then spread locally by mosquitoes that bite those birds. The mosquitoes can then pass the virus to humans and animals. Horses are a dead-end host and therefore infected horses pose no threat to public health but they can be severely affected and they are an indicator of the presence of the virus in mosquito populations.

Important points to remember:

1. Be aware that clinical signs of WNV are consistent with other important neurological diseases, and pursue an accurate lab diagnosis for confirmation.
2. Discuss prevention strategies with clients (mosquito controls) and stress that their horse cannot give the owners WNV.
3. Vaccination remains the single most effective way to prevent infection in horses.
4. It is a reportable disease to state officials.

For more information concerning WNV and the number of U.S. counties that have confirmed test-positive human and veterinary cases such as horses, visit the following sites:

<http://diseasemaps.usgs.gov/mapviewer/>