



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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WEST NILE VIRUS FOUND IN HORSE IN CITRUS COUNTY

Lecanto—The Citrus County Health Department has confirmed that a horse has died from the West Nile (WN) virus just southeast of Inverness. The public is being notified so that protective measures may be taken when appropriate. Citrus County has been under a medical alert since September due to previous WN activity in that area. Health officials want all citizens living in counties under the medical alert to continue to be on heightened awareness.

A total of 51 counties in Florida are now included in this alert: Alachua, Baker, Bay, Bradford, Broward, Calhoun, Citrus, Clay, Collier, Columbia, Dade, Dixie, Duval, Escambia, Flagler, Franklin, Gadsden, Gilchrist, Gulf, Hamilton, Hernando, Highlands, Holmes, Jackson, Jefferson, Lafayette, Lake, Lee, Leon, Levy, Liberty, Madison, Marion, Martin, Monroe, Nassau, Okaloosa, Palm Beach, Pasco, Putnam, Santa Rosa, Seminole, St. Johns, Sumter, Suwannee, Taylor, Union, Volusia, Wakulla, Walton and Washington counties.

Remember, all mosquito-borne illnesses are **preventable**. Even though the weather is changing, the Department of Health is still urging **all** Floridians to take the following precautions against mosquito bites:

- Avoid outdoor activities at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are likely to be looking for blood meals;
- If you must be outdoors when mosquitoes are active, cover up by wearing shoes, socks, long pants and long-sleeved shirts;
- Use mosquito repellent containing DEET according to manufacturers' directions; and
- Eliminate stagnant water in any receptacles in which mosquitoes might breed.

Symptoms of West Nile virus encephalitis include headache, fever, fatigue, dizziness, weakness and confusion. The virus has infected 11 Floridians this year; however, none of these cases have been fatal.

For more information on mosquito-borne encephalitis, including reporting human cases and dead birds, visit the DOH Bureau of Epidemiology's Arboviral Encephalitis and West Nile Virus website at MyFlorida.com (click on Health and Human Services, then Consumers – Diseases and Conditions, then Arboviral Encephalitis or West Nile Virus) or http://www.doh.state.fl.us/disease_ctrl/epi/htopics/arbo/index.htm. Floridians may also call the toll-free West Nile virus hotline number at 1-800-871-9703.

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