

Protect your horse from West Nile virus

It's wise to vaccinate your horse against the mosquito-borne virus

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A horse from Palermo was recently euthanized after testing positive for **West Nile virus** (WNV), according to a Butte County Public Health Department (BCPHD) press release. Four humans in Butte County have also been diagnosed with the virus, which is most commonly spread by mosquitoes. “West Nile virus is circulating at higher levels than we have seen in years,” noted county health officer **Dr. Mark Lundberg**.

When contracted by horses, WNV—which in horses carries a mortality rate of 40 percent to 50 percent—can cause inflammation of the brain and/or spinal cord. Horses with WNV may display weakness, lack of coordination, muscle tremors, circling, stumbling, falling, loss of appetite, fever, seizures, partial paralysis and coma.

There are a number of preventative vaccines available for horses, but no specific treatment once the horse has contracted the disease. However, “supportive and symptomatic treatment assists in the recovery of ill horses,” according to the BCPHD press release.

Go to www.westnile.ca.gov for more info on WNV.