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For Immediate Release

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PUBLIC HEALTH URGES OWNERS TO VACCINATE HORSES AGAINST WEST NILE VIRUS NOW

BUTTE COUNTY, Calif. – Mosquito season is here! Horse owners are urged to vaccinate their horses against West Nile Virus (WNV) now, if they have not already done so.

WNV is here to stay in Butte County. Horses are at significant risk each year, particularly during summer months. Proper vaccination is the best defense. In 2012, 22 horses in California were confirmed positive for WNV, and 8 of them were either euthanized or died. Most of the horses that were ill with WNV were unvaccinated or improperly vaccinated.

Several effective vaccines are available. Horse owners should discuss vaccination options with their veterinarian to determine an appropriate vaccination plan for their horses. Horses need to be revaccinated annually, ideally prior to mosquito season.

In horses, West Nile Virus may cause a wide range of clinical illness ranging from mild “flu-like” symptoms to inflammation of the brain that may be fatal. Symptoms of WNV infection in horses may mimic other serious neurological diseases such as rabies, equine herpes virus, equine protozoal myeloencephalopathy, and eastern/western encephalomyelitis. Consult a veterinarian if a horse exhibits any of the following signs:

- Stumbling or lack of coordination, especially in rear limbs
- Drooping lips, lip smacking and grinding teeth
- Generalized weakness, muscle twitching and/or tremors
- Head drooping, lethargy and unresponsiveness
- Hypersensitivity to touch or sound
- Fever
- Difficulty rising or inability to rise
- Convulsions or coma

Other control measures recommended for decreasing the risk of WNV infection include:

Reduce Mosquito Numbers

- Eliminate stagnant or standing water by draining ponds, avoiding water overflow from troughs, and reducing run-off and pooling of irrigation water;
- Eliminate accumulated water in flower pot saucers, buckets, wheelbarrows, and remove old tires and other areas in which water can collect;
- Stock ponds, troughs, fountains and other areas of standing water with mosquito fish (available at feed stores and the Butte County Vector Control office in Oroville) or add mosquito dunks to kill mosquito larvae;
- Eliminate piles of decaying organic matter such as leaves, lawn clippings and manure; Cooperate with local Mosquito Control Districts as they institute fogging and other mosquito control measures; and

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- Report dead birds by calling the WNV phone line at 1-877-WNV-BIRD (968-2473) or online at www.westnile.ca.gov.

Reduce Exposure of Horses to Infected Mosquitoes

- Keep horses in a barn during peak mosquito feeding hours (dawn and dusk)
- Use fans to keep air moving in barns
- Apply mosquito repellents with permethrin, particularly in the evening.

For more information on West Nile Virus:

Butte County Public Health

General information about WNV human infection, educational materials and links to other resources: <http://www.buttecounty.net/publichealth/cder/wnv.html>

Local Mosquito and Vector Control Districts

For information about pesticide spraying/fogging and mosquito activity surveillance efforts in your area contact:

Butte County Mosquito and Vector Control District

5117 Larkin Road
Oroville, CA 95965
Phone: (530) 533-6038
Fax: (530) 534-9916

<http://www.bcmvcd.com/>

Oroville Mosquito Abatement District

1275 Mitchell Avenue
Oroville, CA 95965
Phone: (530) 534-8383
Fax: (973) 538-4421

Durham Mosquito Abatement District

PO Box 386
Durham, CA 95938
(530) 345-2875

California Department of Public Health

General information about WNV and human infection, educational materials, surveillance efforts in California, and to report a dead bird online: <http://www.westnile.ca.gov/> or call to report dead birds at 1-877-WNV-BIRD (968-2473).

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC)

General information about WNV (in English and other languages), map of WNV activity in the United States, insect repellent information:

<http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/index.htm>

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For further information, contact: Dr. Mark Lundberg, Health Officer:

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Butte County Public Health Department

Our Mission: To protect the public through promoting individual, community, and environmental health.