



STATE OF CONNECTICUT
DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE
Office of the Commissioner



Bryan P. Hurlburt
Commissioner

860-713-2501
CTGrown.gov

**CONNECTICUT HORSES FOUND POSITIVE FOR EASTERN EQUINE
ENCEPHALITIS VIRUS AND WEST NILE VIRUS**

State Veterinarian Stresses Importance of Vaccinations to Protect Animals

(HARTFORD, CT) – The Connecticut Department of Agriculture announced today the first equine cases of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) and West Nile Virus (WNV) for 2019.

An eighteen-month old female Quarter Horse from Colchester was observed on August 5 by its new owner as having difficulty breathing and acting anxious. The Quarter Horse had a high fever, continuously circled and stumbled into the stall walls. The horse's condition deteriorated quickly despite treatment by the attending veterinarian and died. Diagnostic samples collected at the Connecticut Veterinary Medical Diagnostic Laboratory at the University of Connecticut in Storrs and submitted to the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) tested positive for EEE virus.

The Quarter Horse had no documented history of EEE or WNV vaccinations.

On August 3 a twelve-year-old Draft-cross horse located in Easton was observed by its owner as having a poor appetite, no fever and lethargy. The horse's condition progressed despite veterinary care to where it was sweating, showing signs of colic and possibly needing surgical intervention. At the local referral hospital, the horse presented with a rapid heart rate, muscle fasciculations and profuse sweating. While under medical treatment additional neurologic signs were seen and diagnostic serum samples were submitted for WNV testing. The test result indicated a recent infection with WNV. The horse was relocated to a referral center for specialized medical treatment and is recovering well.

The horse was last vaccinated for WNV in May 2019.

"Horse owners should review vaccination records with their veterinarians to ensure that EEE and WNV vaccinations are current and their horses are protected during the mosquito season," said Dr. Mary Jane Lis, State Veterinarian for the Connecticut Department of Agriculture.

Nationally, as of August 6, 2019, officials in eight states have reported 46 EEE and six WNV equine cases. Horses are the domestic animals most susceptible to infection with the viruses. Neurological diseases of domestic animals, such as EEE and WNV, are reportable to the State Veterinarian.

For more information about equine diseases and about the national equine disease surveillance programs see the USDA APHIS web site at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/animal-health/equine-health>

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Contact: Rebecca Eddy
Rebecca.Eddy@ct.gov
860-713-2538

www.ctgrown.gov

