PRESS RELEASE
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MEDIA CONTACTS:
Megan A. Linske, Ph.D.   Megan.Linske@ct.gov
Douglas E. Brackney, Ph.D. Doug.Brackney@ct.gov
Jamie Cantoni   Jamie.Cantoni@ct.gov

Department of Entomology
Center for Vector Biology and Zoonotic Diseases
The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station
123 Huntington Street
New Haven, CT 06511
Phone: (203) 974-8490

Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station Releases 2024 Statewide Tick Surveillance Results

New Haven, CT – Researchers and staff from the Center for Vector Biology and Zoonotic Diseases at the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) have released findings from the fifth year of the statewide active tick surveillance program. The 2024 results provide critical insights into tick populations and the prevalence of tick-borne pathogens across Connecticut.

More than 4,000 ticks were collected from 40 publicly accessible locations across all eight Connecticut counties during the spring, summer, and fall of 2024. These ticks were then tested for five human disease-causing pathogens: *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* (anaplasmosis), *Babesia microti* (babesiosis), *Borrelia burgdorferi* (Lyme disease), *Borrelia miyamotoi* (hard tick relapsing fever), and Powassan virus (Powassan encephalitis).

Key Findings:

- The most commonly collected species were blacklegged ticks (aka "deer" tick; *Ixodes scapularis*, n = 3,503), followed by longhorned ticks (*Haemaphysalis longicornis*, n = 696), American dog ticks (*Dermacentor variabilis*, n = 74), and lone star ticks (*Amblyomma americanum*, n = 72).

- Two emerging species, lone star ticks and longhorned ticks, were identified in Fairfield, New London, Middlesex, and New Haven Counties. In contrast, these species were only detected in New London and Fairfield Counties when surveillance began in 2019.

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123 Huntington Street
New Haven, CT 06511
203.974.8500
Toll free: 1.877.855.2237
Fax: 203.974.8502
Email: caes@ct.gov ● portal.ct.gov/caes

- New London County reported the highest average adult blacklegged tick density (83 per acre) and the highest average nymphal blacklegged tick density (25 per acre).
- Pathogen testing revealed the highest adult female infection prevalence in Litchfield County (65%) and the highest nymphal infection prevalence in Fairfield County (41%).

Statewide Infection Prevalence in Blacklegged Ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*)

Pathogen	Adults	Nymphs
Borrelia burgdorferi (Lyme disease)	54%	23%
Babesia microti (babesiosis)	16%	16%
Anaplasma phagocytophilum (anaplasmosis)	7%	2%
Borrelia miyamotoi (hard tick relapsing fever)	3%	2%
Powassan virus (Powassan encephalitis)	<1%	-

"The spread of lone star and longhorned ticks in Connecticut, along with increasing blacklegged tick populations, highlights the importance of continued tick surveillance," said Dr. Megan Linske, Vector Ecologist specializing in Tick-Host-Habitat Dynamics at CAES. "Residents should take routine precautions and check for ticks after being outdoors."

To minimize exposure to tick bites and reduce the risk of tick-borne diseases, residents are encouraged to:
- Stay on established trails and avoid bushy or wooded areas.
- Conduct routine tick checks after outdoor activities.
- Wear long sleeves, pants, and light-colored, tightly woven clothing.
- Tuck pant legs into socks when hiking in tick habitat.
- Wear permethrin-treated clothing to repel and kill ticks.

For more information, visit https://portal.ct.gov/caes/tick-office/tick-office/active-tick-surveillance-program/ct-atsp or contact Dr. Megan Linske at Megan.Linske@ct.gov.

Left to right: *I. scapularis* female, *I. scapularis* nymph, *D. variabilis* female, *A. americanum* female, and *H. longicornis* female (credits USDA and CDC).

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