

MEMO

Date: July 27, 2007

TO: Baker City Herald Fax: 541-523-6426
Record Courier Fax: 541-523-5353
Hells Canyon Journal Fax: 541-742-7933
KCMB / KWRL Radio Fax: 541-963-5090

FROM: Baker Valley Vector Control District

RE: West Nile Virus Media Release

There is state laboratory confirmation that mosquitoes from one site within the Baker Valley Vector Control District have tested positive for West Nile Virus. According to Jim Lunders, Manager & Biologist, Baker Valley Vector Control District, the site has been sprayed with adulticide to kill the adult mosquitoes as part of the routine work of the District. In addition the District has stepped up both its larval and adult mosquito control measures in response to the increased arboviral disease risk. The district will also continue to monitor for the virus in both mosquito and bird populations.

West Nile Virus was first detected in the United States in 1999. The virus first appeared in Oregon in 2004 and has infected birds, horses and humans in various areas of the state. The birds most affected are the Corvids – crows, ravens, magpies, and jays. If you find one of these birds please contact the Baker County Health Department (523-8211) or Baker Valley Vector Control District (523-1151). Although there is no evidence that a person can get the virus from handling live or dead infected birds, it is still recommended that you use a shovel or other means to pick up a dead bird and put it into a plastic garbage bag or other container that does not leak.

Horses are also susceptible to West Nile Virus, but horses can be vaccinated against the disease. Horse owners are urged to contact their veterinarians if they wish to vaccinate their horse(s).

In 2006 there were nine (9) human cases of West Nile Virus in Baker County. There is no human vaccine against West Nile Virus. West Nile Virus is not transmitted from person to person. People get this disease from being bit by mosquitoes carrying it. While those aged 50 and older are at greater risk, everyone is urged to take precautions.

Debbie Hoopes, Baker County Health Department Administrator, says that Baker County residents need to step up their efforts to protect themselves from mosquito bites when outside, especially those individuals who enjoy outdoor recreation or work outdoors. Individuals can protect themselves by doing the following five things:

- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding; for example, leaf-clogged gutters, birdbaths, and old tires.

- Avoid mosquito-infested areas at dusk and dawn, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Wear long pants, long-sleeve shirts and other protective clothing when you are outdoors.
- Wear insect repellent, preferable one that contains DEET. Follow label directions when using any repellent. Restrictions apply for small children.
- Make sure that doors and windows have tight-fitting screens. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.

For More information contact:

- If you have questions about West Nile Virus contact Baker County Health Department: 523-8211
- To report dead birds contact the Baker County Health Department (523-8211) or Baker Valley Vector Control District (523-1151)
- Jim Lunders, Manager & Biologist, Baker Valley Vector Control District
- Dr. Emilio DeBess, State Public Health Veterinarian: 971-673-1111
- Debbie Hoopes, Baker County Health Department Administrator: 541-523-8353
- West Nile Virus Toll-Free Telephone Information Line: 866-703-4636 pr 866-703-INFO. The messages are recorded in English and Spanish
- <http://www.bakercounty.org/health/health.html>
- <http://egov.oregon.gov/DHS/ph/acd/diseases/wnile/wnile.shtml>
- www.cdc.gov