

Eastern Equine Encephalitis Identified in Six Gilchrist County Horses

Residents urged to take proper precautions

Trenton – The Gilchrist County Health Department has received notification that six horses in Gilchrist County have tested positive for Eastern Equine Encephalitis. EEE is caused by a virus that is transmitted by mosquitoes and can infect humans. The Health Department urges residents to remain diligent in their personal mosquito protection efforts. These should include the “5 D’s” for prevention:

DOH continues to advise the public to remain diligent in protecting themselves from mosquito bites by following the “5 D’s,” which include:

- **Dusk and Dawn** – Avoid being outdoors when mosquitoes are seeking blood. For many species, this is during the dusk and dawn hours.
- **Dress** – Wear clothing that covers most of your skin.
- **DEET** – When the potential exists for exposure to mosquitoes, repellents containing DEET (N,N-diethyl-meta-toluamide, or N,N-diethyl-3-methylbenzamide) are recommended. Picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus are other repellent options.
- **Drainage** – Check around your home to rid the area of standing water, which is where mosquitoes can lay their eggs.

Tips on Repellent Use

- Always **read label directions carefully** for the approved usage before applying a repellent to skin. Some repellants are not suitable for children.
- Products with concentrations of up to 30 percent DEET are generally recommended. Other potential mosquito repellents, as reported by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) in April 2005, contain picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus. These products are generally available at local pharmacies. Look for active ingredients to be listed on the product label.
- Apply insect repellent to exposed skin, or onto clothing, but **not under clothing**.
- In protecting children, read label instructions to be sure the repellent is **age-appropriate**. According to the CDC, mosquito repellents containing oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under the age of 3 years. DEET is not recommended on children younger than 2 months old.
- Infants should be kept indoors or mosquito netting should be used over carriers when mosquitoes are present.
- **Avoid applying repellents to the hands of children.** Adults should apply repellent first to their own hands and then transfer it to the child’s skin and clothing.

- If additional protection is necessary, apply a permethrin repellent directly to your clothing. Again, always follow the manufacturer's directions.

Tips on Eliminating Mosquito Breeding Sites

Elimination of breeding sites is one of the keys to prevention.

- Clean out eaves, troughs and gutters.
- Remove old tires or drill holes in those used in playgrounds to drain.
- Turn over or remove empty plastic pots.
- Pick up all beverage containers and cups.
- Check tarps on boats or other equipment that may collect water.
- Pump out bilges on boats.
- Replace water in birdbaths and pet or other animal feeding dishes at least once a week.
- Change water in plant trays, including hanging plants, at least once a week.
- Remove vegetation or obstructions in drainage ditches that prevent the flow of water.

Additionally, officials encourage anyone who discovers a dead bird to report it via the Internet. The bird mortality reporting system is located on the Florida Fish and Wildlife Conservation Commission's website at: <http://myfwc.com/bird/> . If people do not have access to the Internet, they may report dead birds to their county health department or local FWCC office.

For more information on mosquito borne illnesses, visit the DOH website at: www.doh.state.fl.us, the CDC website at: www.cdc.gov, or call the Gilchrist County Health Department at 352-463-3120.