



NEWS RELEASE

ALABAMA DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC HEALTH

RSA Tower 201 Monroe Street, Suite 914 Montgomery, AL 36104

Phone 334-206-5300 Fax 334-206-5534

www.adph.org

Alabama Department of Public Health cautions Cleburne County residents to take protective measures to avoid Eastern Equine Encephalitis

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CONTACT:

Dee W. Jones, DVM

(800) 201-8208

Lem Burell

(256) 240-6606

The Alabama Department of Public Health has confirmed at least one positive case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in a horse located in the city limits of Heflin in Cleburne County. A horse owner has reported the deaths of five horses between Aug. 15 and Sept. 15. Additional cases have been reported in horses in other counties including Dallas, Elmore and Montgomery during 2012.

Reports are received from the Alabama Department of Agriculture and Industries following testing at one of its veterinary diagnostic laboratories.

According to Dr. Dee W. Jones, State Public Health Veterinarian, the significance of positive horses means the virus is present in the mosquito population. He warns that the same mosquitoes that infect the animals pose a risk to humans. The confirmation of viral activity is very common in the late summer and fall months. Positive case counts in the state fluctuate from year to year based on mosquito populations. The virus can only be spread through the bite of a mosquito, so positive horses do not increase the viral activity in the area, nor increase the risk to humans.

"With many people enjoying the more pleasant weather outdoors this fall, it is important that residents take every effort to reduce their exposure to mosquitoes," Jones said. "Keep your mosquito repellent with you at all times when you are working or participating in recreational activities outdoors."

Since mosquitoes are commonly found throughout much of Alabama, health officials offer practical strategies for the mosquito season:

The following recommendations are urged for people to minimize mosquito exposure.

- * Stay indoors if possible, especially during the dusk and dawn hours, when mosquitoes are most active.
- * If you go out during the dusk and dawn hours, wear light-colored, tightly woven, loose clothing, and insect repellent.
- * Wear enough insect repellent to cover skin and clothes that contain one of the following EPA

- registered ingredients: DEET, Picaridin, Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus/PMD or IR3535:
- o Contact your health care provider with concerns about repellents.
 - o Do not use repellents under clothing.
 - o Never use repellents over cuts, wounds or irritated skin.
 - o Spray repellent on hands first and then apply it on children and faces. Do not apply to eyes, mouth, and apply sparingly around ears.
 - o After returning indoors, wash treated skin and clothes with soap and water.
- * Keep window and door screens shut and in good condition. Repair holes.
 - * Inspect your yard for places a mosquito could use to breed. Eliminate breeding sites.
 - o Dispose of containers that collect water, like buckets, cans, bottles and jars.
 - o Repair leaky pipes and outside faucets, unclog drains and gutters.
 - o Empty and scrub birdbaths, pet bowls and animal troughs to get rid of mosquito eggs.
 - o Dispose of unused tires. Overturn or store under cover wheelbarrows, tubs, wading pools when not in use.
 - o Keep weeds, vines and grass trimmed.
 - o Fill tree holes with sand or mortar.
 - o Change water in flower vases and pots twice weekly.