

MEDIA RELEASE

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West Nile virus confirmed in Kittitas County horse

The Washington State Department of Agriculture (WSDA) reports that West Nile virus (WNV) has been confirmed in a horse in Kittitas County. It is unknown if the horse contracted WNV while in Kittitas County; however, Kittitas County residents should take steps to prevent WNV infection.

Take steps to control mosquitos outdoors including removing items that may hold standing water like buckets, tires, etcetera. Use EPA registered repellent and clothing to cover the skin to prevent mosquito bites.

There is a vaccine available for horses to prevent WNV infection, which should be administered annually in the spring. Many horses infected with WNV do not become ill and will show no symptoms. If symptoms are displayed, they may include loss of appetite, loss of coordination, confusion, fever, stiffness, muscle tremors, and muscles weakness (especially in the hindquarters). About one-third of all horses that become ill with WNV will die (Washington State Department of Agriculture).

The Kittitas County Public Health Department (KCPHD) receives reports regarding WNV in horses and mosquitos as part of disease surveillance, because WNV can affect people in addition to other animals. There is no human vaccine for WNV.

For more information about West Nile virus, visit the DOH website at <http://www.doh.wa.gov/WNV>. For questions regarding WNV vaccine for horses, please contact your local veterinarian office. For questions regarding the confirmed horse case, please contact the Kittitas County Public Health Department at 509-962-7515.

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