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MSU Reports Rare Case of Eastern Equine Encephalitis in Van Buren County Puppy

State health officials urge draining mosquito pools

LANSING - Officials with the Michigan Department of Agriculture and Rural Development (MDARD) and Michigan State University’s (MSU) Diagnostic Center for Population and Animal Health (DCPAH) today confirmed Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE) in a Van Buren County eight-week-old puppy.

EEE is a serious viral disease spread by mosquitoes that can affect people, horses, and poultry such as pheasants, emu, ostriches, quail, and ducks. EEE infection and disease can occasionally occur in other mammals, such as this puppy, and also in reptiles and amphibians.

“There have been other reported cases of EEE in dogs, but as far as we are aware, not in Michigan,” said DCPAH Associate Director Dr. Thomas Mullaney. “Private veterinarians may want to consider EEE if there are neurological issues during an examination, especially if dogs have been living outside with no mosquito control on the premises.”

In this case, the puppy had a sudden onset of seizures, was thin and weak, and unable to stand. During examination, the puppy had seizures, was hospitalized, became progressively worse, and the owner agreed to have the dog euthanized. MSU’s DCPAH later confirmed EEE as the cause of the puppy’s illness.

“This is a challenging year for vector borne diseases. Drought conditions and warm weather lead to stagnant pools of water which are breeding grounds for mosquitoes,” said State Veterinarian, Dr. Steven L. Halstead. “This just shows how important it is to protect dogs, cats, and horses from the illnesses that mosquitoes and other vectors such as fleas, ticks, and biting flies can cause.”

Mosquito management is vital in the prevention of West Nile Virus, EEE, and heartworms in dogs and cats. Eliminate standing water by properly discarding old tires, filling ruts and pot holes, and removing water from tarps, pool covers, and other items.
where it may collect. Changing water in bowls, buckets, troughs, bird baths, and wading pools at least once each week, especially during the warmer weeks of late summer, are just a few simple steps to prevent mosquito-borne illnesses.

Additional practices to reduce mosquito exposure include:

- If you are able, keep pets indoors from dusk till dawn, when mosquitoes are out in full force.
- Horses can also be stabled during times when mosquitoes are most active. Placing fans to blow in stalls and on stabled horses will also help keep mosquitoes from lighting and feeding.
- Finally, products are available to repel or kill fleas, ticks, mosquitoes, and biting flies from dogs and cats, repellent sprays are available for livestock, and vaccines against EEE and WNV are available for horses.
- Owners should consult a veterinarian on specific products and usage.

For more information on EEE in dogs visit:
http://vdi.sagepub.com/content/17/6/614.full.pdf

Information on DCPAH is available at: www.animalhealth.msu.edu

Be the first to be informed of other livestock diseases by joining the Michigan Animal Health Listserv on: www.michigan.gov/emergingdiseases

Editor’s Note: For an interview with State Veterinarian, Dr. Steven L. Halstead on mosquito borne illnesses visit www.youtube.com/MIAgriculture