

County West Nile Virus Grants For 2003 Issued

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Acting Secretary Kathleen A. McGinty recently announced more than \$6.5 million in grants to counties for mosquito surveillance and control as part of Pennsylvania's battle against the West Nile virus in 2003.

"Counties are invaluable partners in our fight against West Nile virus. It is this strong working relationship that has kept the West Nile outbreak less severe in Pennsylvania than in most other states," said Acting Secretary McGinty. "We are confident our grants will again provide county West Nile officials with the resources they need to identify areas where large numbers of mosquito larvae

are located, and where spraying is needed, so we can get a good start on this year's effort."

Last year, as West Nile virus spread across the country, the virus was identified in all but four Pennsylvania counties. Fifty-nine people contracted the virus, and eight died because of it.

"Last year's outbreak makes it clear we need to continue our aggressive and proactive program to reduce the mosquito population in Pennsylvania. Over the past three years, our DEP and county officials have refined and targeted their mosquito surveillance and control efforts to make the best use of our financial and technical resources, and we will do that again in 2003," McGinty said.

"Despite the 59 human cases, and tragically, the eight deaths, Pennsylvania's citizens faced fewer cases of the disease than people in most states, in large part due to the aggressive and well targeted mosquito surveillance and control effort run by our DEP staff and their county colleagues."

West Nile virus is transmitted by mosquitoes from infected birds to people and other birds. Most people bitten by an infected mosquito will never get sick, and most who do get sick will experience only flu like symptoms.

However, a very small percentage of people bitten by an infected mosquito will develop West Nile encephalitis, an infection that can cause an inflammation of the brain.

Cases of West Nile have occurred in Pennsylvania primarily from mid-summer through early fall.

Although hot summer days seem far away now, county West Nile teams will be starting surveillance for larvae in early April, when the larvae begin to hatch. Despite a tight state budget, Acting Secretary McGinty said DEP is proposing that 63 of the state's 67 counties receive at least as much funding for their West Nile program as they spent during 2002.

Susquehanna and Cambria Counties are contracting for some services on their own, and will therefore need less state money. Dela-

ware County spent much more than anticipated on mosquito control during the fourth quarter of 2002.

Philadelphia purchased mosquito control products in the fourth quarter of 2002 for use during 2003, so the funding need for this year will be lower.

The funding for counties can only be guaranteed through the current state budget, which runs through June 30. Funding proposed for counties for July 1 through December 31 will be finalized when the 2003-2004 state budget is passed by the legislature and signed by the governor.

USDA Issues Conditional License For West Nile Virus Vaccine For Horses

WASHINGTON, D.C. — The U.S. Department of Agriculture announced in August of 2002 that it has issued a conditional license to Fort Dodge Laboratories, Inc., of Fort Dodge, Iowa, a division of American Home Products, Inc. for a vaccine intended to aid in the prevention of disease in horses caused by West Nile virus.

USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service issues conditional licenses for veterinary biologics products to meet an emergency situation, limited market, local situation, or special circumstance. The special circumstance addressed here is the need for a product to aid in the prevention of disease caused by West Nile virus.

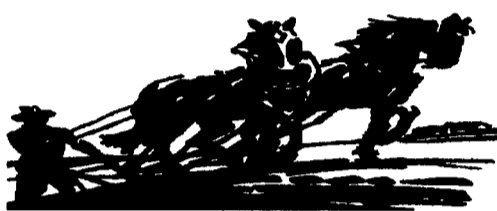
Under these regulations, a product that is shown to be pure and safe and demonstrates a reasonable expectation of efficacy may be licensed while data to establish efficacy and potency are still being obtained.

Conditional licenses are generally issued with restrictions

and for a limited period of time. At the end of the conditional license period, data obtained in support of the product's efficacy, potency, and product performance are evaluated to determine if the conditional license should be renewed or if a regular product license may be issued.

In keeping with these regulations, the product described above has been issued a conditional license for one year. The product is restricted to use by a veterinarian in those states where use of the product has been approved by the appropriate state regulatory authorities.

Horse owners planning to ship their animals to other countries should be aware that vaccinated animals may not meet the import requirements of those countries due to the presence of certain antibodies in their blood. While the presence of this antibody is not permanent, it could lead to complications in shipping the horse.



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