

Navajo Nation Veterinary & Livestock Program
PO Box 1450 ♦ Window Rock ♦ Arizona ♦ 86515

EQUINE ADVISORY – FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
NAVAJO NATION PRESS RELEASE:

The Navajo Veterinary & Livestock Program is encouraging horse owners to make sure that their horses are vaccinated against West Nile Virus. West Nile vaccinations should be an annual vaccination along with your spring 5-way vaccination and deworming schedule especially since WNV is endemic (naturally in the environment) since it arrived to the Navajo Nation in 2003. West Nile, the disease, is spread by the bite of an infected mosquito carrying the virus, which may develop into a brain inflammation disease in humans, horses and birds.

Presently, the Navajo Nation has one (1) area of where a positive horse has been confirmed with the West Nile Virus: the Chinle Valley. This animal was never vaccinated against West Nile. The animal began showing signs of the disease on July 21, the disease progressed until the horse was unable to balance and was euthanized at the Chinle Veterinary Clinic, July 23, 2013. Laboratory confirmation of West Nile virus was received August 1, 2013.

The NNVLVP urges the public to take precautions against the bite of mosquitoes; once again the “Fight the Bite” prevention for people and horses is stressed. Prevent mosquitoes from breeding by decreasing standing water around your home and stables. Use insect repellants to prevent bites to horses and make sure all horses have WNV vaccinations in place. People should utilize your DEET products to prevent mosquito bites and limit early morning and evening hours outside when mosquito activity is the highest; wear protective clothing if you need to be outside during these times.

For additional information to protect yourself from West Nile contact:

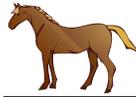
- Division of Health – Health Education Program (928) 871-7967
- Community Health Representative Program (928) 729-4027

For more information call the nearest NNVLVP clinic: Chinle (928) 674-2069,
Shiprock (505) 368-1007 and Tse Bonito (505) 371-5214.

West Nile Virus in Horses

Spring 2003-2013

Navajo Nation Veterinary and Livestock Program



What is West Nile Virus?

West Nile Virus is a mosquito-spread disease that affects birds, humans, and horses. West Nile Virus is carried by birds and spread to other animals by mosquitoes. West Nile virus infections generally occur during warm weather months when mosquitoes are active. WNV is presently endemic within the area. Annual precautions are recommended such as vaccinating your horse to prevent the impact of the disease.

How is it spread?

Horses are the main animals susceptible to the West Nile Virus. West Nile Virus does not usually affect animals other than horses and other equine. West Nile Virus is not a contagious disease from horse to horse so there is no quarantine issued for this disease.

Signs and symptoms of WNV infection in horses may include:

One of the first signs usually is head droop, loss of coordination, stumbling, or staggering, circling, weakness or paralysis of limbs, inability to stand, muscle twitches or tremors, apparent blindness, lip droop, grinding teeth, and death. These signs are not specific for WNV infection, and may be caused by other diseases including rabies. WNV vaccine protects horses against the West Nile Virus. Horse owners should contact their local Navajo veterinary clinic for any additional questions:

- Two doses of the vaccine given three weeks apart are required, if the horse has never been vaccinated before. Following the second dose, it will be about three weeks until the immunity reaches protective levels. Plan 6 weeks in advance to gain the appropriate protection levels.
- Horse(s) vaccinated last spring will require an annual injection for protection. Remember it will be about three weeks until the immunity reaches the highest level of protection.
- Use an insect repellent for horses. Premise sprays for stables.

Mosquitoes become infected with WNV by feeding on infected birds. There is no evidence that a person can acquire the disease by handling live or dead birds or other infected animals. The NNVLPP encourages the public to take precautions such as utilizing insect repellent and limiting standing water around homes to cut down on mosquito breeding sites.

To reduce the risk of becoming infected with WNV, people should:

Take precautions for yourselves and your horses. Should your horse have any of the previously described signs and symptoms, they need veterinary attention and should be taken to veterinary clinic. Please call ahead to the veterinary clinic, in case our vet staff is in the field. The Navajo Veterinary & Livestock Program would like to prevent the likelihood of this disease – **VACCINATE YOUR HORSES EVERY SPRING.**

For more information:

- ❖ Navajo Veterinary & Livestock Program: Chinle clinic (928) 674-2069, Shiprock clinic (505) 368-1007 and Tse Bonito clinic (505) 371-5214
- ❖ NN Health Education Program (928) 871-7967
- ❖ NN Community Health Representative (CHR) Program (928) 729-4027