The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

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PRESS RELEASE

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Update: Positive Mosquitoes for Eastern Equine Encephalitis Virus in Voluntown

West Nile virus-positive mosquitoes detected in 20 towns

New Haven, CT – The State Mosquito Management Program announced today that mosquitoes trapped in Voluntown on September 12, 2016 have tested positive for eastern equine encephalitis (EEE) virus. This represents the first sample of EEE-positive mosquitoes identified in the state by the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) this season. In addition, West Nile virus (WNV) infected mosquitoes have been identified in 20 Connecticut towns: Bridgeport, Cromwell, Darien, East Haven, Easton, Fairfield, Hartford, Manchester, Milford, New Britain, New Haven, Newington, Stamford, Stratford, Wallingford, Waterford, West Hartford, West Haven, Westport, and Wethersfield.

"Although mosquito populations are declining, the detection of EEE virus requires continued monitoring," said Dr. Philip Armstrong, Medical Entomologist at the CAES. "This is the first detection of EEE virus in mosquitoes since 2013 when a human fatality occurred in that same region of Connecticut."

"Mosquitoes are still active, and EEE and West Nile virus continue to be detected in the state" said Dr. Theodore Andreadis, Director of the CAES. "I encourage residents to take measures to prevent mosquito bites, such as using insect repellent and covering bare skin, especially during dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active."

Eastern equine encephalitis is a rare but serious viral disease in people. On average there are 6 human cases each year in the United States. The mortality rate of hospitalized patients is one-third and approximately one-half of people who survive infection suffer from permanent neurological damage. In Connecticut, outbreaks of EEE have occurred sporadically in horses and pheasants since 1938 and the first locally-acquired human case was reported in the fall of 2013.

West Nile virus is the most common mosquito-borne viral disease in the United States and reemerges every summer in Connecticut. Since 2000, 131 human cases of WNV-associated illnesses including 3 fatalities have been confirmed in the State.

The State of Connecticut Mosquito Management Program is a collaborative effort involving the Department of Energy & Environmental Protection, the Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station, the Department of Public Health, the Department of Agriculture, and the University of Connecticut Department of Pathobiology and Veterinary Science. These agencies are responsible for monitoring the potential public health threat of mosquito-borne diseases.

The CAES maintains a network of 91 mosquito-trapping stations in 72 municipalities throughout the state. Mosquito traps are set Monday – Thursday nights at each site every ten days on a rotating basis. Mosquitoes are grouped (pooled) for testing according to species, collection site, and date. Positive findings are reported to local health departments and on the CAES website at http://www.ct.gov/caes/mosquitotesting.

For information on EEE and WNV and how to prevent mosquito bites, visit the Connecticut Mosquito Management Program Web site at www.ct.gov/mosquito.

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