



## Ford County Public Health Department

235 North Taft Street

Paxton, IL 60957

June 13, 2017

For Immediate Release

Contact: Brandi Williams, Office Manager

(217)379-9281

[bwilliams@fordcountyphd.org](mailto:bwilliams@fordcountyphd.org)

### **Ford County Public Health Department Kicks off Mosquito Surveillance Program**

Through an Illinois Department of Public Health Vector Control Grant, Ford County Public Health Department staff conducts public surveillance, education, trapping, identification, and monitoring of the *Culex Pipiens* (a.k.a. Northern House mosquito), *Aedes Albopictus* (Asian Tiger mosquito which is known to inhabit used tire piles), and many others which transmit the West Nile Virus (WNV), St. Louis, LaCrosse and Western Equine Encephalitis viruses. Control and elimination of mosquito areas and population are then targeted. Identification and control of the mosquito population is an important public health function due to their ability to pass disease.

June 1, 2017, Ford County Public Health Department began the West Nile virus surveillance program for this year. This includes trapping adult mosquitoes and testing them for the West Nile virus. FCPHD uses a gravid mosquito trap. The trap is labeled with instructions: do not remove the trap, contact the FCPHD with questions or concerns and includes the number to reach FCPHD.

The gravid mosquito trap captures gravid female mosquitoes--those with mature eggs. The trap consists of a pail or pan of water with organic material and a small battery--powered suction tube. When mosquitoes attempt to enter the container to lay eggs, they are sucked up into the net where they are held for collection. These traps are particularly useful for testing for West Nile virus, because gravid females have already blood--fed on birds or mammals and therefore may already be infected with the virus. The gravid trap is widely used for WNV surveillance because of its ability to attract gravid *Culex* females, which are the main vectors driver of WNV. Many types of organic infusion can be utilized to attract the gravid female.

The health department also sends birds that have recently died from unknown causes to a state laboratory to test for West Nile virus. Persons who observe a sick or dying crow, blue jay, robin or other perching bird should contact the health department. To report an overabundance of mosquitos or a dead bird contact the Ford County Public Health Department at 217-379-9281.

It is important that everybody do their part now to protect themselves and their family from mosquito bites. The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) provides the following information about Wes Nile virus. West Nile virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. Anyone living in an area where West Nile virus is present in mosquitoes can get infected. West Nile virus has been detected in all lower 48 states (not in Hawaii or Alaska). Outbreaks have been occurring every summer since 1999. The risk of infection is highest for people who work outside or participate in outdoor activities because of greater exposure to mosquitoes. Illness from West Nile disease usually occurs 2 to 14 days

after the bite of an infected mosquito and is usually mild and includes fever, headache and body aches. However, serious illness such as encephalitis or meningitis, with lingering complications and even death, are possible. Serious illness can occur in people of any age. However, people over 60 years of age are at the greatest risk for severe disease. People with certain medical conditions, such as cancer, diabetes, hypertension, kidney disease, and people who have received organ transplants, are also at greater risk for serious illness. If you think you or a family member might have West Nile virus disease consult a healthcare provider for evaluation and diagnosis. Most cases of West Nile virus occur from June to September but if mosquitoes are present there is the potential of West Nile virus.

For more information about Mosquito Borne Diseases, visit:

<http://www.dph.illinois.gov/topics-services/environmental-health-protection/structural-pest-control/mosquitoes-disease>

##