



## HEALTH AND HUMAN SERVICES DEPARTMENT

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### PUBLIC HEALTH –ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH

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Immediate Release – 9/05/06

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#### **West Nile virus found in Yamhill County**

A dead blue jay found in the Sheridan area has tested positive for West Nile virus (WNV), public health officials in Yamhill County reported today.

While Public Health officials are concerned about the possibility of human cases of West Nile virus, this remains a disease primarily of concern among equines. WNV affects horses, mules, donkeys and other equine much more often than other animals. Estimates are about a third of horses that become ill with WNV die. Horse owners are encouraged to vaccinate their animals including an annual booster for WNV. It is not too late to have your animal vaccinated for the year, some protection is offered even if full immunity has not developed.

Typically dead birds are the first sign that WNV is active in a community. Last year 14 birds tested positive in Oregon, as well as eight people and 41 horses. Birds are more susceptible to the disease, they become sick quicker and die. In order to pass along the infection a mosquito must bite an infected bird and then bite another bird, horse or human.

To reduce your chance of being bitten by a mosquito, health officials advise five key prevention steps:

- Screen doors and windows should fit tightly. Repair or replace screens that have tears or holes.
- Wear long pants, long-sleeve shirts and other protective clothing when outside.
- Eliminate all sources of standing water that can support mosquito breeding such as clogged gutters, birdbaths and old tires.
- Avoid playing or working outside at dawn and dusk, when mosquitoes are most active.
- Repellant use, preferably one that contains DEET, Picaridin or oil of lemon eucalyptus, is advised. Follow label directions carefully. Never apply DEET directly to children or put it on children's hands. Apply repellant first to your own hands and then onto the child. Do not use oil of lemon eucalyptus on children under age three.

Yamhill County Public Health has set up an Information Line to help the community get the information they need. The line has recorded messages about WNV, protection, reducing mosquito habitat, reporting dead birds and other topics. Our goal is that people can call this number to get vital information about Public Health issues. You may call the Information Line 24 hours a day at 503-474-4968 or 554-7888, or visit the Public Health website at [www.co.yamhill.or.us/ph](http://www.co.yamhill.or.us/ph) and click on West Nile virus. There is also a statewide toll-free WNV hotline for people to call for recorded information in English and Spanish at (866) 703-4636.

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