Southwest Nebraska
Public Health Department

NEWS RELEASE

October 10, 2017
For Immediate Release
Contact: Melissa Propp, RN, Surveillance Nurse 308-345-4223 nurse@swhealth.ne.gov

West Nile Virus
Positive Horse SWNPHD Health District

The first positive West Nile Virus horse has been reported in the Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department (SWNPHD) nine county health district for 2017.

"Horses cannot transmit West Nile Virus to other horses, animals or to humans. However, they can get the virus from a mosquito bite." states Melissa Propp, RN, Surveillance Nurse at SWNPHD. "WNV causes encephalitis, which is an inflammation of the brain."

Per the Nebraska Department of Agriculture, the signs and symptoms of West Nile encephalitis in horses includes loss of appetite, depression, fever, quivering muscles, and weakness of limbs. Infected horses may or may not show clinical signs.

While there is no specific treatment for horses with WNV, the Department of Agriculture has these recommendations for prevention.

- House horses indoors during peak periods of mosquito activity (dusk and dawn).
- Avoid turning on lights inside the stable during the evening and overnight.
- Place incandescent bulbs around the perimeter of the stable to attract mosquitoes away from the horses.
- Remove all birds, including chickens that are in, or close to, the stable.
- Topical preparations containing mosquito repellants are available for horses. Read the product label before using and follow all instructions.
- Fogging of stable premises can be done in the evening to reduce mosquitoes; read directions carefully before using.

Vaccination is the best practice in prevention of WNV in horses. Owners should contact their veterinarian for additional information.

More information on West Nile Virus may be found at SWNPHD web site www.swhealth.ne.gov or call 308-345-4223. Southwest Nebraska Public Health Department serves Chase, Dundy, Frontier, Furnas, Hayes, Hitchcock, Keith, Perkins and Red Willow counties. SWNPHD's is also on Facebook and Twitter.

####