

July 2003

Environmental



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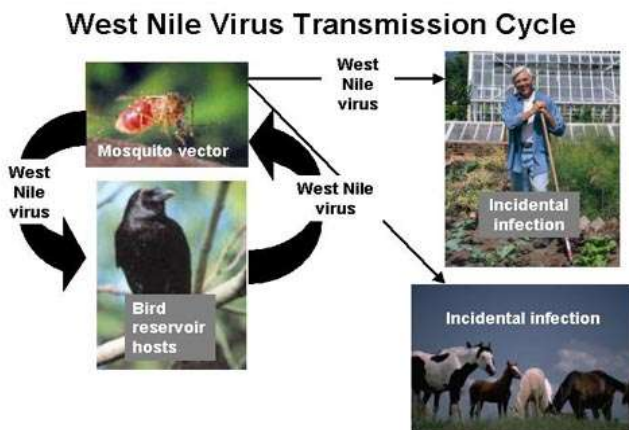
Diseases in the news.....

Lately, it seems that everywhere you turn there is a disease or illness making headlines. For example:

- Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS),
- West Nile Virus,
- Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy (BSE), aka “Mad Cow Disease”, and
- Exotic Newcastle Disease (END)

Some of these diseases have an insect or animal connection. BSE and END have had major impacts on imports, exports and livestock transportation issues.

West Nile Virus:



In the past few years, West Nile Virus has managed to make its way across the United States from the east coast. According to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), “*human illness from West Nile virus is rare, even in areas where the virus has been reported. The chance that any one person is going to become ill from a mosquito bite is low. You can further*

reduce your chances of becoming ill by protecting yourself from mosquito bites.”

The CDC and the NC Department of Environment and Natural Resources (DENR) have information available at:

- <http://www.cdc.gov/ncidod/dvbid/westnile/>
- <http://www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/phpm/wnv/>

You can also obtain information on mosquito control and bite prevention from your local county health department or Cooperative Extension office.

In North Carolina, testing of dead birds was stopped in November 2002 and will begin again on July 1, 2003. So far, the CDC reports that West Nile Virus has been detected in 138 bird species. It is requested that you continue to report dead birds to your local county health department, even if they will not be submitted for testing.

NCDENR testing requirements dictate that a bird carcass will only be accepted if it:

- is a crow, blue jay, cardinal or raptor (hawk, eagle, owl, etc.),
- was found in North Carolina,
- is less than 36 hours old,
- does not have an odor,
- does not have maggots (inside or outside the bird), and
- is a whole bird.

Bovine Spongiform Encephalopathy:

Mad cow disease, or BSE, is a fatal brain disorder that causes progressive neurological degeneration in cattle. An unknown agent causes the cow's brain cells to die, thereby forming sponge-like holes in the brain. The cow

behaves strangely and eventually dies. Similar to BSE, Creutzfeldt-Jakob disease (CJD) is a rare disease that occurs in humans. In 1996, British scientists found a possible link between BSE and a new variant of CJD (vCJD). It is not certain how BSE may be spread to humans; however, evidence indicates that vCJD may occur after consuming BSE-contaminated cattle products

According to the Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA), BSE has not been detected in the United States since active surveillance efforts began in May 1990. To prevent BSE from entering the US, severe restrictions were placed on the importation of live ruminants (cows, goats, sheep, etc.) and certain ruminant products from countries where BSE was known to exist. These restrictions were later extended to include importation of ruminants and certain ruminant products from all European countries. **There is a reason why travelers are asked if they are bringing any foodstuffs or certain items into the US!!**

To further protect US livestock, the US Food and Drug Administration (FDA) established a ruminant feed ban in 1997. With this ban, ruminant products (meat, bones, etc.) could not be used in feedstock materials that would be fed to other ruminants. The FDA has a website that discusses the steps taken by a variety of US agencies to protect the public and our livestock:

<http://www.fda.gov/oc/opacom/hottopics/bse.html>

The APHIS website has the following statement (http://www.aphis.usda.gov/oa/pubs/ada_ahend.htm)

“Exotic Newcastle disease (END) is a contagious and fatal viral disease affecting all species of birds. END is so virulent that many birds die without having developed any clinical signs. END can infect and cause death even in vaccinated poultry. Mortality is up to 90 percent of exposed birds.”

Smuggled pet birds and backyard flocks are of great concern during an outbreak, because they can bring the disease into the US or contribute to the spread of the disease to other areas. Because of the danger to US poultry flocks, APHIS has strict quarantine and movement regulations. So far, the recent outbreaks in California, Texas, Arizona, and Nevada have resulted in 18,606 quarantined premises, 2,651 depopulated premises, and 3,498,081 destroyed birds. Most of the sites have been backyard flocks or pets (parrots, parakeets, etc.).

Other countries also take END very seriously. APHIS has a website that lists the various countries that have restricted trade with the US due to concerns about END:

<http://www.aphis.usda.gov/lpa/issues/enc/tradingsum03.html>

It is a LONG list of countries. Restricted items includes eggs, live birds, and various poultry products.

Sincerely,

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OFFICIAL BUSINESS

Exotic Newcastle Disease:
