

# USDA's Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health Releases Outlook Findings for 2003 West Nile Virus in Equids Throughout the United States

The outlook for West Nile Virus in Equids during 2003 varies regionally, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Center for Epidemiology and Animal Health, a part of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Veterinary Services program.

The outlook report indicates that fewer West Nile Virus equine cases will occur in the Northeast region during 2003 than occurred in 2002. Numbers in the Southern region may decrease, although there still will be a significant number of cases. In the Central region, case numbers should approximate those of the previous year. Since this is the first year West Nile Virus will likely appear in many areas of the Western region, unvaccinated equids will be highly susceptible and significant numbers of cases are expected in that region.

The outlook discusses factors that influence the viral threat to equids and resistance of the equids to the disease. Furthermore, it discusses two main factors that influence the occurrence of WNV in a given population of equids: the existence of mosquitoes carrying the virus and the presence of susceptible equids in geographic proximity to mosquitoes.

Additionally, the following topics are discussed:

- Mosquito/bird cycles;
- Mosquito abundance;
- WNV vaccine;
- Mosquito mitigation; and
- Outlook for 2003 by region.

To receive further information on the 2003 outlook for WNV in equids, visit VS' Web site at: <http://www.aphis.usda.gov/vs>.

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