

**Broome County Health Department
Begins Larvicide Application for 2004 Season
August 11, 2004**

Broome County Executive, Jeffrey P. Kraham, announced today that the Broome County Health Department would begin application of a mosquito larvicide in the storm sewers with catch basins in selected localities in Broome County. This action is being taken to help prevent the spread of West Nile virus by averting the development of adult mosquitoes in these locations. The areas selected for treatment are the City of Binghamton, Villages of Johnson City, Endicott, and Port Dickinson, and portions of the Towns of Vestal, Union, Fenton, Chenango, Binghamton, Conklin, Kirkwood, and Dickinson.

Application of the mosquito larvicide Vectolex CG (active ingredient *Bacillus Sphaericus*) will begin Monday, August 16, 2004, and will continue through October 31, 2004, or as long as is needed to treat the appropriate catch basins. Vectolex CG is commonly used for larval control in catch basins.

Targeted pests include mosquitoes in the larval stage of development, specifically those species known to carry the West Nile virus. In compliance with the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation Larvicide Permit, catch basins near wetlands will not be treated.

Questions regarding the application of pesticides may be directed to Mr. Robert Denz, Broome County Health Department, at 778-2887, the New York State Department of Environmental Conservation at 315-426-7403, or the Central New York Regional Poison Control Center at 800-222-1222.

“Surveillance for West Nile virus in mosquitoes, birds, and humans conducted in 2002 and 2003 indicates that this additional intervention may be necessary to help prevent the human illnesses found in 2002,” said Mr. Kraham. “Treatment of catch basins is a supplement to household habitat reduction. There are approximately 13,000 catch basins in Broome County but over 80,000 housing units, therefore household habitat reduction is still the most effective activity that can be taken against West Nile virus in all areas of the county.” Personal protection and habitat reduction are the basis of any mosquito management plan.

Mr. Kraham reminds all Broome County residents to take the following important steps against West Nile virus:

- Dispose of tin cans, plastic containers, flower pots or other items that hold water;
- Remove all discarded tires from your property;
- Drill holes in the bottom of recycling bins kept outdoors;
- Clean clogged rain gutters;
- Turn over wheelbarrows and wading pools when not in use;

- Change water in birdbaths at least every four days;
- Clean and chlorinate swimming pools, outdoor saunas and hot tubs; drain pool covers; and
- Use landscaping to eliminate low spots where standing water accumulates.

County Public Health Director, Claudia A. Edwards, stated, “Seven human cases of West Nile virus were confirmed in Broome County in 2002 and no confirmed cases were seen in 2003.” Ms. Edwards went on to emphasize that the risk of a normal healthy adult or child becoming seriously ill with the West Nile virus is very small, indeed less than one percent.

Although the elderly are at increased risk for developing serious illness as a result of West Nile virus infection, the risk is still exceedingly small. The best way to avoid serious illness is to avoid mosquito bites. Senior citizens should install or repair screens around their homes; wear protective clothing; and consider the use of insect repellent containing DEET when outdoors at dusk or dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

Dead crows are an early sign of West Nile virus activity in an area. The American or Common Crow is a large, chunky, completely black bird measuring between 17 and 21 inches from the tip of the bill to the tip of the tail. Crows have a wide, thick black beak. Grackles, Blackbirds and Starlings are often mistaken for crows but all three are less than half the size of crows.

This year, as in the past two years, Anne B. Clark, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Biological Sciences, Binghamton University, will be conducting research on ill crow behavior and will be collecting ill and dead crow, or Blue Jay, reports from residents. Broome County residents can report ill or dead crows by contacting Dr. Clark at Binghamton University at 777-6228 or e-mail at crowsch@binghamton.edu.

“Dead bird sightings are very important for the Health Department to track WNV activity,” stated Ms. Edwards. “We appreciate the dead crow calls that Broome County residents have made in past years and we hope residents will call Dr. Clark with dead crow sightings this year. However as in past years, not all crows will be collected or tested,” she noted. Crow specimens collected and calls reporting dead crows will be recorded for research purposes only. Residents can report other types of dead birds to the United States Department of Agriculture Wildlife Service Hotline toll free, at 1-866-537-2473.

Contact the Broome County Health Department’s West Nile Virus information line at 778-3911, option 3, for more information about mosquito larviciding or, option 4, for information about insect repellents. Additional West Nile virus information can be found on the Health Department website at www.gobroomecounty.com/safety/.