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NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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FIRST WEST NILE VIRUS POSITIVE DEAD BIRD IN 2009 REPORTED IN KINGS COUNTY

HANFORD - The Kings County Health Department and the Kings Mosquito Abatement District announced today that the first West Nile virus positive dead bird in 2009 has been confirmed in Kings County.

Although this is Kings County's first West Nile virus activity this year, in 2008 there were two human cases in Kings County. Since the county's first human case in 2005, there have been a total of 42 WNV cases, including four deaths.

According to the Kings County Health Officer, Dr. Michael Mac Lean, West Nile virus will be a continuing presence in Kings County. Even when the mosquito infection rate is low, people can still be bitten by an infected mosquito. He noted that the Kings Mosquito Abatement District provides highly professional and effective mosquito control services that are focused on eliminating as many mosquitoes as possible before they emerge as biting adults. Dr. MacLean added that there is also much that residents can do to reduce the risk of WNV to themselves and the community. "It is crucial that people be aware of WNV and know the measures they can take to prevent mosquito breeding and to minimize their exposure to mosquitoes and reduce the chance of becoming infected."

The Health Department and the Kings Mosquito Abatement District encourage all residents of Kings County to report dead birds to the District. Reporting dead birds is critical for monitoring West Nile virus activity. The District also encourages residents to report "Green Pools." Swimming pools that

are not maintained can be a breeding ground for the species of mosquitoes that transmit West Nile virus. The District can be reached at 584-3326, or by e-mail at office@kingsmosquito.net.

Residents are urged to take the following precautions:

- DEFEND yourself against mosquitoes by using a repellent with an effective ingredient such as Deet, Picaridin, or Oil of Lemon Eucalyptus. Make sure to follow label directions.
- DRAIN all sources of standing water that may support mosquito-breeding habitats.
- Door and window screens should fit tight and be in good repair. This will prevent mosquitoes from entering your home.
- Do vaccinate your horses. Horses are highly susceptible to West Nile virus- approximately half of all horses that get WNV are euthanized.
- DAWN and Dusk are times to avoid being outdoors, since this is when mosquitoes are most active.
- Dress appropriately by wearing long sleeves and pants when outdoors and mosquitoes are present.
- Dead birds should be reported to 1-877-WNV-BIRD (1-877-968-2473). Not all birds will be picked up and tested, but reporting dead birds provides important information for mosquito control efforts.

Kings Mosquito Abatement District is located at 10871 Bonney View Lane in Hanford. Residents may call the District to report mosquito problems at (559) 584-3326 or visit the office between 7:30am to 4:00pm to get free mosquito fish for ornamental ponds or horse troughs.