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DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH PALM BEACH COUNTY WEST NILE VIRUS DETECTED—BELLE GLADE

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Palm Beach County, FL—Florida Department of Health in Palm Beach County early warning system for mosquito borne diseases, the sentinel chickens, have detected West Nile Virus in Belle Glade. All residents are advised to take the necessary precautions to avoid mosquito bites.

"We are constantly monitoring for mosquito borne diseases like West Nile Virus, Chikungunya, and St. Louis Encephalitis. Today's confirmation of the presence of West Nile Virus is a good reminder for all to take the necessary preventive measures," said Department of Health Palm Beach County Director Dr. Alina Alonso.

To protect against mosquito bites people are advised to drain any standing water from around the home or business as mosquitoes leave their eggs in the smallest water reservoir. All are also advised to make sure windows and doors are screened properly and in good condition, and use air conditioning. When outside use an insect repellent that contains DEET or Picardin, wear light weight long sleeved shirts, long pants and socks especially at dusk and dawn when mosquitoes are most active.

DOH-Palm Beach has sentinel chicken flocks strategically placed from Delray Beach to Jupiter and west in Belle Glade and Pahokee. These chickens donate a blood samples weekly to be tested in the Florida State Laboratory for the presence of mosquito borne viruses. Chickens do not contract the disease but can carry the virus in their blood.

The last few years Zika virus has been the prominently circulating mosquito borne disease, but we have also seen human cases of Dengue Fever, and Chikungunya. The last reported human case of West Nile Virus was in 2011.

Further information can be found at www.flhealthpalmbeach.org, www.flhelth.gov, or twitter @HealthyFLPBC.