

Weekly Ag Report
Cheryl Lauritsen, Ag Commissioner's Office and Fair Board Member
August 30, 2017

Good Morning. I hope everyone had a great summer. This is Cheryl Lauritsen with news from the Lassen County Agriculture Commissioner's Office and the Lassen County Fair.

We all know that there is the potential for the West Nile Virus to show up here in the Honey Lake Valley, and unfortunately it has. Our office received notice from the State Veterinarian that there was a confirmed case here in Lassen County on August 28, 2017. A yearling quarter horse colt that had no history of being vaccinated was confirmed positive after displaying neurologic signs. The West Nile Virus is a mosquito-borne virus that was first detected in New York in 1999. There are a wide variety of clinical signs of the illness ranging from mild "flu-like" symptoms to encephalitis which is an inflammation of the brain. WNV may be fatal to horses and humans.

You should consult your veterinarian if your horse exhibits any of the following clinical signs:

- Fever
- Incoordination, especially in rear limbs, causing stumbling and falling
- Generalized weakness, muscle twitching, seizures or coma
- Drooping lips and lip smacking, head drooping, grinding teeth
- Hyper sensitivity to touch or sound
- Inability to rise

Prevention is the key to minimizing the risk of infection in both humans and horses. A good vaccination program for your horse that includes a WNV vaccine and reducing your horse's exposure to mosquitoes during the peak mosquito feeding periods at dawn and dusk will help decrease the risk of exposure. Unfortunately, there are no preventative vaccines for humans. Applying mosquito repellent to horses and humans can reduce the number of mosquito bites. Humans should also wear protective clothing, such as long sleeved shirts and long pants during peak feeding periods. The elimination of mosquito breeding sites is also very important. Methods of elimination include:

- Draining unnecessary standing water around your yard and barn area
- Water containers such as bird baths and plant saucers should be cleaned at least weekly
- Scheduling pasture irrigation to minimize standing water
- Keeping swimming pools optimally chlorinated and draining water from pool covers regularly
- Stocking water troughs with fish that consume mosquito larvae or using mosquito "dunk" tablets which are available at most hardware stores

You can find more information on WNV at the California Department of Food and Agriculture website or by contacting either the Lassen County Health Department or the Lassen County Agriculture Department.

Now for news from the Lassen County Fair. I know the fair has been over since July, but the annual Carcass Contest winners were announced last week. The Carcass Contest is an extension of what happens in the

livestock show ring. It is a contest in which the carcass is evaluated on the quality of the meat and how much meat that carcass produces, also known as the yield. Some components of the contest are the carcass weight, the ribeye area and the fat thickness. Evaluation of the live animal in the show ring uses overall appearance and structural soundness. Genetics, breeding, selection, nutrition and management can affect both the live animal and carcass evaluation. Overall, the carcass information can help identify practices that result in a high performing animal that produces a superior carcass for the consumer.

Here are the 2017 4-H and FFA Carcass Contest winners:

Lamb

- 1st Place – Courtney Horsley – Susanville FFA
- 2nd Place – Cade Renner – Richmond 4-H Club
- 3rd Place – Taylore Somerville – Richmond 4-H Club

Swine

- 1st Place – Lucas Fish – Milford 4-H Club
- 2nd Place – Abigayle Dunn – Milford 4-H Club
- 3rd Place – Alex Shaw – Johnstonville 4-H Club

Beef

- 1st Place – Waylon Miller – Richmond 4-H Club
- 2nd Place – Morgan Gould – Milford 4-H Club
- 3rd Place – Cade Lile – Susanville FFA

Good job everyone!

I hope everyone has a happy and safe Labor Day holiday.