



Emerging and Reemerging Infectious Diseases, Region of the Americas

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Report Confirms the Circulation of West Nile Virus (WNV) in Puerto Rico

18 June 2004: In a press release, the Secretary of Health of Puerto Rico confirmed the detection of West Nile Virus (WNV) in three horses from the area around Fajardo, based on the confirmation issued this week by both the Department of Health of Puerto Rico and the Dengue Division of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), located in San Juan.

These new findings can be added to those on the two native birds that tested positive for WNV among the 183 captured in the Roosevelt Roads area in Ceiba, which were considered to be the first instances where the virus was detected in Puerto Rico.

Faced with the introduction of West Nile Virus, authorities are working to strengthen the surveillance system for the early detection of cases among humans, in animals, and in vectors. To date, no human cases have been reported.

The Department of Health issued a strong warning to the population to adhere to personal protection for disease prevention now that this new agent has been introduced into Puerto Rico.

Source: Press release from the Department of Health of Puerto Rico contained in an e-mail communication sent to the PAHO Communicable Disease Unit.