



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever Prevention Education

Window Rock, AZ -May 18, 2012 -The Navajo Nation Foreign Animal Disease (FAD) Task Force was hosted by the Navajo Health Education Program on KTNN Radio Station Wednesday evening, May 16th, for a live Forum Program with public input. The topic of discussion was the Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF) Prevention.

The Veterinary and Livestock Program (NNVLP) activated the Navajo Nation's FAD Task Force to bring attention to RMSF. The main emphasis is the prevention and public education on RMSF. "We don't want the Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever to become an outbreak here on the Navajo Nation. We want to protect our people", said Glenda Davis, Program Manager for NNVLP.

Over 250 cases of RMSF impacted several tribal communities in Southern Arizona. The risk factors of this disease include: 1) Large populations of free roaming dogs that have the brown dog tick attached to them. 2) Lack of animal control. 3) Lack of adequate waste disposal. 4) Limited access to pest control. These communities have sustained 18 fatalities from RMSF; mostly in young children. Serious complications develop and can lead to death if the RMSF patient is not diagnosed and treated early. RMSF can be prevented when treated with the appropriate antibiotic.

The brown dog tick, one of the carriers of RMSF, lives on and feeds primarily on dogs. Free roaming dogs become carriers of these ticks. RMSF is not spread person to person or from dogs to people. A human being can contract RMSF when bitten by a tick that is carrying the Rickettsia bacteria.

Symptoms begin showing anywhere from 2 to 14 days following a tick bite. The individual bitten by an infected tick may begin feeling a sudden fever, a severe headache, there may be deep muscle pain, nausea and vomiting. Some people may get a rash on the arms and legs within 3 to 5 days after the fever begins. These symptoms mimic other illnesses. It is best to get medical attention right away.

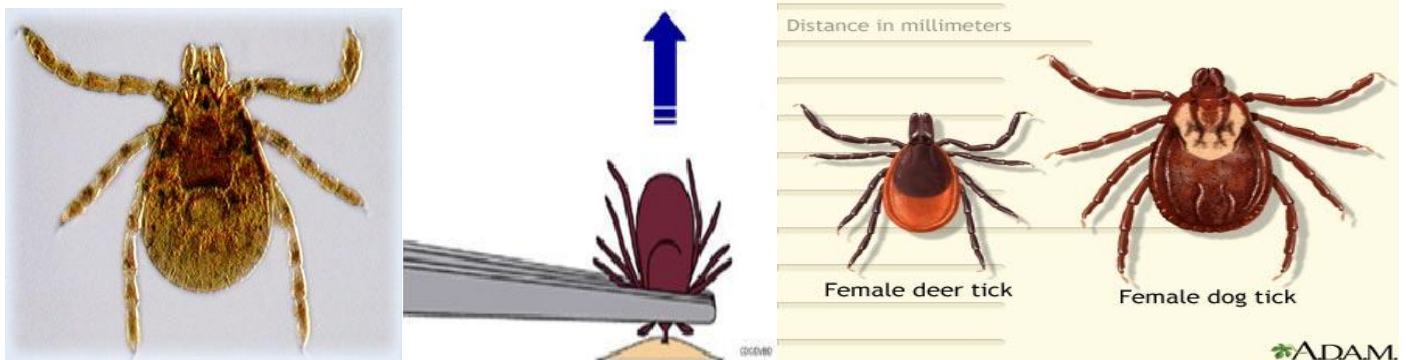
Methods of keeping ticks under control include:

- Assessing the family dogs and cats for brown dog ticks. Remove ticks with a tweezer, carefully, and place in a Ziploc Bag and dispose of in a garbage container.
- Cleaning the yard, hauling old furniture sitting in the yard to a local dump.
- Cutting the weeds or mowing the grass.
- Making sure to use insect repellent that contain DEET on exposed areas and even spraying your clothes to keep ticks, fleas and mosquitos off while enjoying the outdoors.
- Using a pesticide on the inside and outside of the home. Pay attention to places where dogs sleep. Navajo Environmental Protection Agency advises users of ready-made pesticides or insecticides to read instructions carefully before using the chemicals.
- Do a tick check on yourself and your children if you spent time outdoors or have been near pets, indoors or outdoors. Places to check are on your clothing, all over your body, ankles, in the groin area, under arms, in your hair and along the hairline.

The President of the Navajo Nation signed a proclamation on May 9th to assist the Navajo Nation Veterinary and Livestock program with animal control measures for the health, safety and protection of not only human lives but pets and animals as well.

For information on Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever you may contact the Navajo Health Education Program at (928) 871-6562, the NNLVP at (928) 871-6615, the Pest Control Program at (928) 729-6359 and Navajo EPA at (928) 871-7892. You can also go on-line at <http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/diseases/> to find out more about ticks.

The Navajo Community Health Representative program will also provide RMSF Prevention Education for your community. The phone number to CHR is (928) 871-6782.



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