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WVDA Suggests Tips to Avoid Ticks

Charleston, WV - As of July 16th, the National Veterinary Services Laboratories (NVSL) have confirmed *Haemaphysalis longicornis* or longhorned tick's presence in the following West Virginia counties: Tyler, Taylor, Hardy, Ritchie, Putnam, Lincoln, Monroe, Marion and Mason. While there has not been any reported spread of diseases from these ticks, prevention and preparation are key to keeping everyone safe. To help ensure safety, the West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) suggests following five tips to avoid tick bites and contact with ticks:

1. Use insect repellent with at least 20% DEET; apply to clothes and shoes.
2. Buy permethrin treated clothing or treat your clothes with permethrin.
3. Avoid piles of leaves and tall grasses.
4. Check your body and your pet's body every 2-3 hours if you or they have been in areas with tall grass.
5. Different animals require different repellent. Don't treat cattle with the same repellent you would treat your lambs or your dogs.

"At this point, we believe the longhorned tick has invaded every county in the Mountain State. As we continue to confirm its presence, we want everyone to be safe and take precautions when they are in wooded areas," said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. "It is important to protect our livestock and animals, as well as ourselves."

If you find a suspected longhorned tick on your person or your animals, please contact the WVDA Animal Health Division at (304) 558-2214 or your local veterinarian.

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For questions about tickborne diseases or more information about how to prevent ticks on people, please call DHHR's Division of Infectious Disease Epidemiology at (304) 558-5358, extension 1, or visit <http://dhhr.wv.gov/oeeps/disease/Zoonosis/Tick/Pages/default.aspx>.

The West Virginia Department of Agriculture protects plant, animal and human health through a variety of scientific, regulatory and consumer protection programs. The Commissioner of Agriculture is one of six statewide elected officials who sits on the Board of Public Works.

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