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May 17, 2018

WVDA WARNS PUBLIC TO BE ON THE LOOKOUT FOR EXOTIC TICK

Charleston, WV - The West Virginia Department of Agriculture (WVDA) is advising the public to be on the lookout for a potential, new tick threat to West Virginia. On Monday, May 14, the National Veterinary Services Laboratory (NVSL) in Ames, IA confirmed the finding of the *Haemaphysalis longicornis* tick (otherwise known as the East Asian or longhorned tick) in Virginia. The tick appeared on an orphaned calf found on a beef farm located in Albemarle County, VA.

“Our beef industry is the second largest agricultural commodity in the state. This exotic tick is a threat to angus and beef farmers a like,” said Commissioner of Agriculture Kent Leonhardt. “We are asking the public to be aware this tick may already be in West Virginia.”

In late 2017, the longhorned tick was found initially in New Jersey. No known direct link exists between the Virginia farm and the area in New Jersey where the tick first appeared. The WVDA is working with the United States Department of Agriculture and other West Virginia stakeholders to determine if the tick is present in the state. Active tick surveillance and livestock infestation investigations have been initiated. Suspicious ticks will be submitted to the NVSL for analysis and confirmation.

“Livestock producers, animal owners and veterinarians should notify the State Veterinarian’s office if they notice any unusual ticks, or ticks that occur in large numbers on an individual animal. Typically, these ticks are seen in the greatest numbers in spring and fall but can persist through all four seasons, especially in warmer weather,” said State Veterinarian Dr. James Maxwell. “Livestock producers can work with their veterinarians to develop a tick prevention and control program.”

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For more information, please contact the WVDA's Animal Health Division at 304-558-2214.

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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