



The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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HIGHER TICK ABUNDANCE AND INFECTION WITH LYME DISEASE OBSERVED STATEWIDE

New Haven, CT – The Tick Testing Program at The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) is reporting higher tick abundance and infection with *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the causative agent of Lyme disease and other tick-borne pathogens this spring throughout Connecticut. According to Dr. Goudarz Molaei, who directs the CAES Tick Testing Program, “we have received over 450 ticks so far this year and nearly 38% have tested positive for Lyme disease spirochetes, 10% for *Babesia microti*, the causative agent of babesiosis, and 5% for *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*, the causative agent of human granulocytic anaplasmosis.” The higher tick abundance appears to be related to warmer winter temperatures in the State during the last two years.

Over the past five years, the Tick Testing Laboratory has received 12,483 ticks from Connecticut residents or health departments for testing and on average 27% tested positive for the Lyme disease agent.

“Although we have yet to reach peak tick activity this spring, adult deer ticks, *Ixodes scapularis*, are already active and biting residents in greater numbers,” said Dr. Theodore Andreadis, Director of CAES. “At this time of year, personal protection measures and conducting tick checks remain the most effective ways to reduce the risk of tick-borne diseases.”

Lyme disease is the most commonly reported vector-borne disease in the United States. According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), Lyme disease affects an estimated 329,000 people in the U.S. each year and can cause severe damage to joints and the nervous system. According to the Connecticut Department of Public Health, there were 2,553 reported cases of Lyme disease, 286 cases of

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babesiosis, and 120 cases of human granulocytic anaplasmosis in Connecticut in 2015.

Infection rate for *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the causative agent of Lyme disease, in *Ixodes scapularis* (Blacklegged or deer) ticks tested at the CAES Tick Testing Laboratory, 2016

| County | Number of ticks tested | <i>Borrelia burgdorferi</i> % positive |
|---------------|-------------------------------|---|
| Fairfield | 1237 | 26.3 |
| New Haven | 492 | 31.5 |
| Hartford | 166 | 31.9 |
| Litchfield | 121 | 29.7 |
| Middlesex | 64 | 32.8 |
| New London | 22 | 40.3 |
| Tolland | 31 | 25.8 |
| Windham | 11 | 54.5 |

Detailed information about the Tick Testing Laboratory, personal protection measures, tick control measures, and tick-associated diseases can be found at the following websites:

<http://www.ct.gov/caes/cwp/view.asp?a=2837&q=378212&caesNav=|>

<http://www.cdc.gov/ticks/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/lyme/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/anaplasmosis/>

<http://www.cdc.gov/parasites/babesiosis/>

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