The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station

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PRESS RELEASE

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THE CONNECTICUT AGRICULTURAL EXPERIMENT STATION REPORTS INCREASED PREVALENCE OF LYME DISEASE PATHOGEN IN CONNECTICUT TICKS AND EXPANSION OF TICK TESTING PROGRAM

New Haven, CT - The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) announced today that 34% of blacklegged ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*) submitted to the Tick Testing Laboratory thus far this year have tested positive for the Lyme disease agent, *Borrelia burgdorferi*. This represents an increase of nearly 7% from an average of 26% over the last five years of testing, 2010 to 2014.

Also announced was an expansion of the program to include testing for two emerging tick-associated pathogens for the first time: *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*, the causative agent of Human Granulocytic Anaplasmosis, and *Babesia microti*, the causative agent of Babesiosis, for which 12.0% and 3.6% of ticks have tested positive, respectively.

“These findings highlight the growing risk of human infection with tick-associated diseases throughout the state and the importance of taking precautionary measures to avoid tick bites” said Dr. Theodore Andreadis, Director, CAES.

The CAES Tick Testing Program was established in 1990 as a service to local health departments and districts in order to assist physicians and Connecticut residents concerning treatment. Each year, an average of 3,000 ticks are submitted for testing. In the past, testing was limited to the Lyme disease agent, but in view of increasing human cases of this and other tick-related illnesses in the state, testing has been expanded.

“The expansion of this program to include three important tick-associated pathogens that cause human disease represents a significant enhancement of our tick testing services” said Dr. Goudarz Moleai, who directs the program. “With the introduction of new molecular-based methods the average turnaround time

has now been reduced to three days or less".

Lyme disease is the most prevalent arthropod-associated disease in the U.S., with an estimated 300,000 cases per year. From 2010 to 2014, 13,983 human cases of Lyme disease, 659 cases of Babesiosis and 286 cases of Anaplasmosis were reported in Connecticut.

Table: Prevalence of *Borrelia burgdorferi, Babesia microti*, and *Anaplasma phagocytophilum* in *Ixodes scapularis* ticks tested at the CAES Tick Testing Laboratory, 2015

County	Number Ticks Tested	Percent (%) Positive		
		Borrelia burgdorferi	***Babesia microti***	***Anaplasma phagocytophilum***
Fairfield	610	31.1	14.2	4.8
New Haven	189	38.1	15.6	3.9
Hartford	75	32.0	19.4	3.0
Litchfield	46	50.0	15.2	8.7
Middlesex	36	30.6	5.6	2.8
New London	17	35.3	5.9	5.9
Tolland	10	60.0	20.0	0
Windham	3	66.7	0	0
Total	**986**	**33.9**	**12.0**	**3.6**

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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