

NEWS RELEASE

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For immediate release

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County fairs are fun times:

Avoid dangers with insect repellent and hand sanitizers provided by PPHD

One of the big highlights of every summer is the annual county fair. With fresh air, food vendors and quality entertainment, the fair draws crowds primarily to outdoors activities -- often in the evening or near dusk. These are prime feeding times and grounds for hungry mosquitoes, as well.

Mosquitoes are not only a nuisance they can also carry dangerous viruses such as West Nile Virus. Tabi Prochazka, environmental health coordinator at Panhandle Public Health District, said, "West Nile Virus is transmitted through the bite of a mosquito that has picked up the virus by feeding on an infected bird. In turn, the mosquito can pass the virus to humans."

Prochazka urges residents to take precautions, there have been numerous positive mosquito pools throughout the Panhandle. PPHD will continue to collect dead birds and trap mosquitoes for additional surveillance to confirm that the virus is present in the area. To report a dead bird please call PPHD at 308-487-3600 ext 107 or toll free at 866-701-7173. Testing will only be conducted on birds that have died within 24 hours, with no evidence of maggots or rotting. Bring your DEET repellent along with you to the fair, but if you forget, PPHD is providing DEET towelettes.

Prochazka encourages everyone to follow these simple precautions to protect themselves and their families.

- Use a mosquito repellent that contains DEET. Wear long-sleeved shirts, long pants, shoes and socks.
- Take extra precautions when going outdoors at dawn and dusk when mosquitoes are most active.
- Get rid of standing water.
- Add larvicides to animal drinking troughs.
- Keep window screens in good repair.

Hand sanitizers are being provided near food vendors and livestock areas to encourage wellness. PPHD wants to remind everyone how important it is to wash their hands or use hand sanitizer.

Always wash your hands or use hand sanitizer:

- Right after petting animals, touching the animal enclosure, and exiting animal areas even if you did not touch an animal,
- After playing a game or going on a ride,
- Before eating and drinking, or preparing food or drinks, and
- After using the restroom, changing diapers, and or removing soiled clothes.

County Fairs in the Panhandle

Morrill County-July 27-August 3
Dawes County- August 2-9
Cheyenne County - July 28-August 3
Sioux County - July 27 -August 4
Sheridan County – July 21-27

Kimball/Banner County-August 6-12
Garden County-August 1-4
Box Butte County - August 4-11
Deuel County-August 7-10

For additional information visit www.pphd.org or call PPHD at 308-487-3600 or toll free at 866-701-7173. Panhandle Public Health District is working together to improve the health, safety and quality of life for all who live, learn, work and play in the Panhandle. Our vision is that we are a healthier and safer Panhandle Community.