

GEORGE LATIMER, Westchester County Executive

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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LONGHORNED TICK FOUND IN WESTCHESTER COUNTY

The longhorned tick has arrived in Westchester County. The New York State Departments of Health and Agriculture & Markets confirmed the presence of this tick, whose scientific name is *Haemaphysalis longicornis* tick, in the County. The tick is native to Australia, New Zealand and eastern Asian, but has been found recently in New Jersey, Virginia, West Virginia, North Carolina, Arkansas and now New York.

While the longhorned tick has transmitted disease to humans in other parts of the world, more research is needed to determine whether this can happen in the United States. Health Commissioner Sherlita Amler, MD, is once again advising Westchester residents to protect themselves, their farm animals and pets against ticks.

"It is always better to prevent tick bites whenever possible and to remove ticks as soon as possible, and the discovery of a new tick in our area gives us one more reason to be vigilant in performing tick checks on ourselves, our children and pets," said Amler. "Farmers and livestock owners should consult with their veterinarians and continue to use the same preventive measures that work for other ticks."

State Health Department research scientists collaborated with researchers at Fordham University and at the Lyme Disease Diagnostic Center of New York Medical College to identify these ticks. The identifications were confirmed by the Rutgers University Center for Vector Biology and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA).

This tick is a concern for the agricultural industry because it may pose a threat to livestock. The State and County Health Departments advise farmers to work with their veterinarians to check their animals, particularly cattle, sheep and horses, for exposure to ticks and to ensure their parasite control plans are up to date and working. Symptoms of tick-borne disease in cattle include fever, lack of appetite, dehydration, weakness and labored breathing.

If longhorned ticks are suspected, farmers should consult with their veterinarians and can contact the New York State Department of Agriculture and Markets Division of Animal Industry at 518-457-3502 or dai@agriculture.ny.gov for more information.

Tick prevention and removal tips are available at www.westchestergov.com/health and include:

While hiking, working, or spending time in wooded areas:

- Wear long pants and long-sleeved shirts to protect against ticks other biting insects.
- Check for ticks often while outdoors and brush off any ticks before they attach.
- Perform a full body check multiple times during the day, as well as at the end of the day to ensure that no ticks are attached.
- Consider use of repellents containing DEET, picaridin or IR3535, following label instructions.

If you have been bitten by a tick of any kind, contact your health care provider immediately if you develop a rash or flu-like symptoms.

About Westchester County

Westchester County, located in the heart of the historic Hudson Valley, covers 500 square miles and has a population of just under a million. Originally home to Native Americans, who were members of the Lenape tribe, it is today a rich mix of many cultures and landscapes. The County is a blend of bustling cities, quaint villages and picturesque towns as well as open spaces and a network of beautiful parks. Westchester is made up of 6 cities, 19 towns and 20 villages. Westchester County is known for top-notch public schools, and a high quality of life. The County is also an intellectual capital, boasting a highly educated workforce, competitive colleges and universities, Fortune 500 companies, world changing non-profits, and cutting-edge research centers. Westchester is led by County Executive George Latimer, who took office in January 2018 as the ninth County Executive. Using inclusion and openness as a foreground, Latimer is fighting to make Westchester a destination for all people to live, work and enjoy. Learn more about Westchester County by visiting www.westchestergov.com

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