



## *The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station*

123 HUNTINGTON STREET, P.O. BOX 1106, NEW HAVEN, CONNECTICUT 06504

*Putting Science to Work for Society  
Protecting Agriculture, Public Health, and the Environment*

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### **PRESS RELEASE**

### **FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

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### **MEDIA CONTACTS:**

Dr. Goudarz Molaei  
Center for Vector Biology & Zoonotic Diseases  
The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station  
123 Huntington Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
Phone: (203) 974-8487  
E-mail: [goudarz.molaei@ct.gov](mailto:goudarz.molaei@ct.gov)

Dr. Theodore G. Andreadis  
Center for Vector Biology & Zoonotic Diseases  
The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station  
123 Huntington Street  
New Haven, CT 06511  
Phone: (203) 974-8440  
E-mail: [theodore.andreadis@ct.gov](mailto:theodore.andreadis@ct.gov)

## **The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station reports increased prevalence of babesiosis and Lyme disease infection in Connecticut ticks in 2015**

**New Haven, CT** - The Connecticut Agricultural Experiment Station (CAES) released the results of tick testing for Lyme and other tick-associated diseases for 2015. Thirty-one percent of blacklegged ticks (*Ixodes scapularis*) submitted to the Tick Testing Laboratory in New Haven tested positive for the Lyme disease agent, *Borrelia burgdorferi*. This represents an increase of nearly 6% from an average of 26% over the last five years of testing, 2010 to 2014.

The Tick Testing Laboratory at the CAES has tested ticks for Lyme disease since 1990 as a service for state residents. Each year, an average of 3,000 ticks are submitted for testing. In 2015, the program was expanded to include two additional emerging tick-associated pathogens: *Babesia microti*, the causative agent of babesiosis, and *Anaplasma phagocytophilum*, the causative agent of human granulocytic anaplasmosis, for which 11.0% and 4.9% of ticks tested positive, respectively. Concurrent infections with two or three pathogens in ticks were also detected, posing an increased risk to human health that may further complicate treatment efforts

“The tick testing results highlight the growing risk of existing and emerging 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.

“Tick testing results in 2015 indicate that greater than 40% of ticks in Connecticut are infected with at least one pathogen capable of causing debilitating human illness, and that tick infection with *Babesia microti*, which causes a serious malaria-like disease in humans, is also increasing throughout the state.”

Phone: (203) 974-8500 Fax: (203) 974-8502

Toll Free: 1-(877) 855-2237

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said Dr. Goudarz Molaei, who directs the CAES Tick Testing Program. Lyme disease is the most prevalent arthropod-associated disease in the U.S., with an estimated 300,000 cases per year according the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. From 2010 to 2014, 13,983 human cases of Lyme disease, 659 cases of babesiosis, and 286 cases of anaplasmosis were reported in Connecticut.

**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		
		<i>Borrelia burgdorferi</i>	<i>Babesia microti</i>	<i>Anaplasma phagocytophilum</i>
Fairfield	1403	29.5	11.0	5.0
New Haven	465	34.0	11.4	5.4
Hartford	162	31.5	14.2	3.1
Litchfield	182	39.0	9.9	6.6
Middlesex	79	31.6	8.9	1.3
New London	59	33.9	8.5	5.1
Tolland	41	31.7	9.8	4.9
Windham	15	33.3	0.0	0.0

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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