

NEWS RELEASE
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**Media Contact:**

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February 11, 2025***Update on the Cluster of Locally Acquired Leptospirosis Infections in Ventura County***

Ventura, CA – Through an ongoing investigation that began in October 2024, Ventura County Public Health (VCPH) has identified 19 individuals who had illness consistent with leptospirosis dating back to January 2024. These illnesses were reported among field agricultural workers, specifically within the caneberry production sector. The infections were suspected to be locally acquired rather than travel-associated.

With support from local, state, and federal agencies, environmental sampling was conducted in and around potentially affected agricultural areas. Preliminary results have shown the presence of *Leptospira*, the bacteria that cause leptospirosis, was detected in samples taken from mud, wet soil, and standing water. *Leptospira* was not detected in irrigation water, potable water, or growing material used on the farms. There is currently no known health risk to the general public through contact with or consumption of berries.

Symptoms and Transmission

Leptospirosis symptoms range from mild flu-like effects, such as fever, muscle aches, and headache, to severe complications that can impact the liver, kidneys, brain, and respiratory system.

Leptospirosis is transmitted through contact with the urine of sick animals, including rodents and livestock. Field agricultural workers who have contact with contaminated water, wet soil, or mud may be at a greater risk for leptospirosis infection. Leptospirosis is not typically spread from person to person.

Prevention Measures for Field Agricultural Workers

VCPH strongly recommends field agricultural workers and employers take the following precautions to reduce the risk of leptospirosis.

- Wear waterproof protective gear and clothing like long-sleeved shirts, pants, and shoes or boots, if possible.
- Use soap and water to wash your hands before and after you:
 - Eat or drink
 - Use the restroom
 - Handle muddy work equipment
 - Handle any animals
 - Remove soiled or wet clothing or muddy boots at the end of the workday
 - Have contact with standing water or wet soil/mud on site
- Cover cuts and scrapes with waterproof bandages.

Treatment and Seeking Care

If diagnosed early, most cases of leptospirosis can be effectively treated with antibiotics. If you are experiencing symptoms and potentially have an exposure risk, contact your medical provider.

For more information about Leptospirosis, people are encouraged to visit information pages created by the [California Department of Public Health](#) and the [Center for Disease Control and Prevention](#).

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