

Introduction:

This issue of our newsletter continues the theme of discussing seasonal diseases and includes the topic of tick-borne diseases. The role of the local or state laboratory in tick-borne disease may well be limited, as a majority of specimens for Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever or Lyme disease are sent to reference laboratories for processing. However, as a source of education and information for the community, the laboratory plays a critical role in providing information to the public, as well as, local physicians. As discussed in the article by Thomas Safranek, M.D, State Epidemiologist, all cases of classic Lyme disease have been imported into Nebraska with the tick contact occurring in an adjacent state. The most common tick vector of *Borrelia burgdorferi*, the agent which causes Lyme disease, is *Ixodes scapularis*. This tick has not been detected in Nebraska. However, continued surveillance is important and the state entomologist, Dr. Wayne Kramer is willing to identify any ticks associated with cases of suspected human disease. You are also no doubt aware that Nebraska has now had a case of Hantavirus infection. To facilitate rapid testing for Hantavirus we have included phone numbers of key individuals who can assist hospitals or laboratories who need to submit specimens.

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