

## ENZOOTIC VIRUS ACTIVITY IN MASSACHUSETTS

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Outbreaks of eastern encephalitis (EE) in Massachusetts which have affected humans and horses occurred during 1938, 1955, and 1956.

To obtain detailed information regarding the enzootic virus activity, four chicken flocks were established in Raynham, Massachusetts to serve as sentinels of virus activity during 1959.

The results reveal that a considerable amount of virus activity occurred during 1959. It was a year in which no human or horse cases of EE occurred in Massachusetts, and by previous standards it was

a year that would have been considered one during which no virus was present.

The high infection rate among the chickens located within a fresh-water swamp, Pine Swamp, was significantly different from the infection rates in the other three flocks. This difference substantiates the hypothesis that a fresh-water swamp, with suitable ecologic conditions, may serve as the enzootic focus for dispersion of EE virus, and that outbreaks of EE among man and horse in Massachusetts are contingent upon conditions favorable to the dispersion of the virus.