

# ASIAN LONGHORNED TICK

## Frequently Asked Questions

### QUICK FACTS:

- Invasive species not detected in Minnesota as of May 2019.
- Will bite a wide range of animal hosts, including people and livestock.
- May potentially spread disease to people and animals.
- Females can lay eggs without mating.



Nymph (left) and adult female  
Asian longhorned tick

### Who should be alerted of suspected longhorned ticks?

If you're concerned about a tick, the first step is to remove it from the host. If you suspect the tick may be a longhorned tick or other unusual type of tick, you can submit the tick to the Minnesota Department of Health using the MDH Tick Submission Form (<http://www.mn.gov/bah/ticks>). If there are any clinical signs of illness please consult your physician (for people) or veterinarian (for animals).

### Are states looking for ticks?

Yes, many states conduct surveillance for ticks. In Minnesota, the Minnesota Department of Health Vectorborne Disease Unit has been monitoring ticks and tickborne diseases for the past several years. Tickborne diseases are becoming increasingly significant to human and animal health. The longhorned tick is one example of an invasive tick species that our state (and other states) is especially interested in monitoring its whereabouts.

### How should a tick be removed?

The most important thing to remember is that ticks should be removed as soon as possible. Special tools are not needed, although tweezers or forceps are helpful. Grab the head of the tick as close to the skin as possible and pull outward slowly and gently. Do not burn the tick with a match, cover it with petroleum jelly or pour kerosene on the tick to remove it; these methods are dangerous and not effective.

### What should I do after removing a tick from my animal?

Clean the bite area with soap and water and monitor the area for any signs of infection. Do not worry if some of the mouthparts of the tick remain attached. Those parts will work themselves out of the body over a short amount of time, like a splinter, and there is no known increased risk of disease transmission. The tick can be saved in a small container or baggie and submitted to the Minnesota Department of Health or your veterinarian for identification. Livestock owners should routinely inspect their animals for any clinical signs of illness (examples include fever, weakness, lack of appetite). Finding engorged ticks on an animal could be cause to keep a closer eye on an individual animal.

### Questions about tickborne diseases in animals?

Contact your veterinarian or the Minnesota Board of Animal Health at 651-296-2942 or [animalhealth@state.mn.us](mailto:animalhealth@state.mn.us).

### Questions about ticks in general or tickborne diseases in people?

Contact your healthcare provider or the Minnesota Department of Health Vectorborne Diseases Unit at 651-201-5414 or [health.bugbites@state.mn.us](mailto:health.bugbites@state.mn.us).



## What is the longhorned tick?

The longhorned tick (*Haemaphysalis longicornis*) is a threat to humans and livestock, including cattle, sheep and deer due to pathogen transmission, heavy infestation causing anemia and death, and damage to hides and fleece. It has been documented on a very large range of species, with immatures favoring birds and smaller mammals, but feeding on larger hosts also. It has been found on almost everything except reptiles and amphibians. It is quite hardy, surviving temperatures well below freezing and up to 104° F. Control is difficult due to its variety of hosts, and in mild climates, up to two generations can be produced per year.

## Where is it?

As of May 2019, it's been discovered in a low number of states in the U.S., including New Jersey, Virginia, West Virginia, Arkansas, North Carolina, New York, Pennsylvania, Maryland, Connecticut and Tennessee; these discoveries do not appear to be connected. It's native to China, Russia, Korea and Japan, and has spread to the South Pacific, Australia and New Zealand.

## How did it arrive in the U.S.?

It remains unknown how the longhorned tick may have been introduced to the U.S. It's possible the tick arrived on an animal imported through one of the East Coast entry ports (airport) or transported via migratory birds or other wildlife.

## How does it move around in the environment?

Like other ticks, it does not move far on its own, but rather it is carried on animal hosts, including birds and mammals.

## What diseases is it known to carry or transmit?

It has the potential to transmit many diseases of both humans and animals (companion animals and livestock). These diseases include babesiosis, theileriosis, Q-fever, encephalitis (caused by a European virus related to Powassan virus), and a severe febrile illness found in China, Korea and Japan (Severe Fever with Thrombocytopenia Syndrome, SFTS) caused by a virus.

## Are both people and animals at risk?

Yes, this species doesn't discriminate in selecting a host. Animal owners should consult their veterinarian for the best methods to reduce and prevent contact with the longhorned tick. People can find great tips about how to prevent tick bites from the Minnesota Department of Health's website [[www.health.state.mn.us/ticks](http://www.health.state.mn.us/ticks)].

## How can it be controlled or avoided?

Complete tick control or eradication is not a feasible option for livestock and companion animal owners. Instead, people should focus their efforts on prevention or reduction of

some of the things that allow ticks to thrive. These simple measures can help reduce ticks and limit their ability to infest your animals.

- The shorter the grass the better. Keeping grass short allows the sun to dry out the ground and remove moisture, which is something ticks need to thrive. Short grass also takes away the "perch" for ticks to quest for their next host.
- Promptly remove any ticks you discover on your animals.

## Companion Animal Tick Tips:

- Routinely check your dogs, cats and horses for ticks after spending time outdoors, especially when in environments where they may encounter ticks. If your companion animals live inside the home, perform these checks before you allow your pet inside.
- Discuss tick prevention with your veterinarian, including oral preventatives, topical products and collars.

## Livestock Tick Tips:

- Forest grazing should be limited because shaded areas with leaf litter and debris on the ground are ideal tick habitat.
- Minimize access to field edges, which is also good tick habitat.
- Keep fencing in good repair to reduce the amount of wildlife that crosses your property.
- Discuss preventative options with your veterinarian, including dips or sprays.



Underside of adult female longhorned tick