

## **TICK-BORNE DISEASE INSTITUTE**

During 1992, the Tick-Borne Disease Institute (TBDI) completed its second long-term funding cycle with the satisfaction of seven existing contracts. Contractors have begun providing reprints of scientific publications supported partially, or in full, by TBDI funds. Copies of these reports are available upon request. During 1993, the TBDI also successfully initiated the third three-year funding cycle. State budget support of \$150,000 allowed the department to fund three research proposals. Although individual grant amounts remain relatively small, the TBDI has been able to provide "seed money" to investigators who have used this initial support to further develop and be awarded, larger grant requests through federal funding sources such as the National Institute of Health and CDC.

## **ROCKY MOUNTAIN SPOTTED FEVER**

Previous years' surveillance records have included annual reports of more than 40 Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever (RMSF) cases. However, during 1992 and 1993, RMSF was reported in only 16 and seven patients, respectively. Historically associated with a 5-10 percent mortality rate, RMSF infection in NYS appears limited to the Long Island area, especially the central and eastern portions of Suffolk County. Tick infection rates in the American dog tick rarely exceed 6-8 percent, which may serve to partially explain the relatively lower case rate. In addition, the American dog tick is much larger than the deer tick and can often be felt by human hosts and brushed off before the tick begins to feed. There may be a dual benefit associated with recently enhanced Lyme disease surveillance and education efforts by public health agencies. People may be more aware of the disease risks associated with ticks in general, and improving their chances of avoiding infection of any tick-borne infection.

