

**NEWS RELEASE**  
**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
October 17, 2008



**Contact:**  
Debbie George  
757.514.4106  
757.374.1770

## **Fire Ants Discovered In Suffolk**

SUFFOLK, VA (October 17, 2008) – The City of Suffolk has identified Red Imported Fire Ant colonies in the Belmont Park area of Suffolk. The active fire ant mounds were reported by a citizen to the Public Works Division of Mosquito Control. The Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (VDACS) was notified of the discovery. VCADS responded, positively identified, and treated the fire ant mounds. There is a high probability that more fire ant colonies exist in the area, but they have yet to be verified by VCADS.

Red Imported Fire Ants are known for their aggressive behavior and venom-packed sting. The ants are highly sensitive to any disturbance of their mounds and react with swarming, relentless attacks. Some people are allergic to fire ant bites which typically leave blistering.

Fire Ant mounds are found in warm, sunny locations such as landscape beds, lawns, around trees and shrubs, along sidewalk cracks and against buildings. The Red Imported Fire Ant builds mounds that are, on average 10" - 24" in diameter and 18" high. But larger fire ant mounds are not uncommon. They also may extend 6' underground. Fire Ants also build soil tubes on foundations of buildings. They are invasive pests of growing concern in our state.

If anyone suspects that they have discovered a Red Imported Fire Ant infestation, they should use caution and contact the local extension office or the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services at (804)786-3515. Additional information may be found on their website at <http://www.vdacs.virginia.gov>.