**Vector Control Technical**

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As this winter winds to a close and spring begins, those of us involved in mosquito control programs throughout the State of Ohio already have, or will soon begin, preparing for the 2017 season. Due to last winter’s unseasonably mild weather, field personal at the Lorain Count General Health District have already observed a significant number of mosquito larvae in some of our semi-public wastewater treatment systems - at the beginning of February !.

Last year mosquito control programs through the State of Ohio began preparing for potential human Zika Virus cases. In 2016, Ohio had 93 travel associated human cases, and 1 case acquired by sexual transmission

It is important to remember that the Zika Virus is primarily transmitted by the “yellow fever mosquito” (*Aedes aegypti*) which is common throughout Central and South America, and the Southern United States - this species is not indigenous to Ohio. The potential concern in Ohio is with the Asian tiger mosquito (*Aedes albopictus)* which has been found sporadically throughout the state, primarily in the central and southern counties of the state, which *may* have some potential to transmit the Zika virus. It is also important to remember that the Zika virus can be spread by sexual contact to unprotected partners.

To better prepare local health departments and their response partners for the 2017 mosquito control season the Ohio Department of Health (ODH), Office of Health Preparedness, has held Zika Tabletop Exercises and Mosquito Control and Surveillance Workshops throughout the state.

In addition, the Ohio Environmental Protection Agency (Ohio EPA) partnered with ODH in 2016 to develop the Mosquito Control Grant (MCG) Program, which made funding available to local health departments to establish new, or enhance existing, mosquito control programs. Ohio EPA is offering grant monies again in 2017 and is now accepting applications. Please visit [Ohio EPA’s website](http://www.epa.ohio.gov/dmwm/Home/ScrapTires.aspx) or email Adam Cummins at [mosquito.grant@epa.ohio.gov](mailto:mosquito.grant@epa.ohio.gov) for more information.

While the Zika virus is currently the emerging arbovirus receiving most attention, it’s important to remember that Ohio has other mosquito vectors capable of transmitting Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE), La Crosse Encephalitis (LaC) and West Nile Virus (WNV). For this reason, it is important that local health departments maintain (or establish) mosquito surveillance and control programs in an effort to identify and control these mosquito species capable of transmitting disease to humans.

This year the ODH – ZDP will again provide testing of mosquito samples for WNV. It is important for all of us with mosquito surveillance programs to show our continued support and utilize the expertise offered by the ODH –ZDP.

In addition, Ohio continues to see an increase in the number of black legged ticks (*Ixodes* *scapularis*) being reported. Currently black legged ticks (*Ixodes* *scapularis*) have been identified in 60 of Ohio’s 88 counties. Since this tick is the primary vector for Lyme disease, accurate identification of this tick is important. If you are unable to identify a tick, Local Health Departments may send ticks to the ODH-ZDP for identification.

If you have any questions on how to begin a mosquito surveillance program, how to ship mosquito samples, vector borne disease statistics, or tick identification, please contact the ODH-ZDP at 614-752-1029 or visit their website at www.odh.ohio.gov/zdp.

I would also like to encourage all OEHA members to attend the Ohio Mosquito and Vector Control Association’s (OMVCA) Annual Fall Conference to be held this year on October 18 & 19th, 2017 at the Summit County Health Department Auditorium, 1867 West Market Street, Akron, Ohio 44313. The annual OMVCA conference always impresses its attendees with a dynamic lineup of speakers. Again, organizations such as the OMVCA are a forum for mosquito and vector control professionals to exchange knowledge and network. It’s important for all of us to show our continued support for these professional organizations by our attendance at these conferences. For more information about OMVCA, or to register for the annual conference go to [www.ohiomosquito.org](http://www.ohiomosquito.org).

Finally, we are always looking for new members to become involved in vector related issues within OEHA. If you are interested in becoming a member of the OEHA Vector Control Committee I encourage you to contact me either by phone at 440-567-4107 or, by email at [spozna@loraincountyhealth.com](mailto:spozna@loraincountyhealth.com).