

Mosquito Control Update

July 19, 2010

The Mosquito Abatement District was informed by the Louisiana State Veterinary Diagnostic Lab in Baton Rouge on Friday that 3 of 111 mosquito pool samples were positive for West Nile virus. One sample was collected from the east Pearl River area, while the other two were collected from the Lacombe area. Two of the positive samples were in the southern house mosquito while the other positive sample was in *Culex salinarius*, a marsh breeding mosquito. The southern house mosquito is the primary vector for West Nile virus. It breeds mainly in roadside ditches that contain water with high organic content. These are the first positive samples for West Nile virus so far this year out of 952 samples tested. About 75-100 samples are collected and tested each week throughout the parish.

The Mosquito Abatement District places more emphasis on the control of the southern house mosquito than any other mosquito species because of its medical importance. All of the roadside ditch breeding sites in the Parish are treated every 5-7 days with *Bti*, a bacterial spore that acts specifically on mosquito larvae. In addition, aerial and truck spraying is routinely performed specifically to reduce the southern house mosquito numbers. Population levels of the southern house mosquito are presently considered low and have been low for the past several months. All of the positive West Nile virus locations were treated Friday night by truck spraying. In addition aerial applications will be conducted in the same areas Monday and Tuesday nights.

Another mosquito species of concern is the Asian tiger mosquito. This species is now common to the area and is a competent vector for West Nile virus. Although there have been no positive samples of this species collected, it is of concern because of its present numbers in the Parish. The Asian tiger mosquito breeds in artificial containers commonly found in and around yards. Regular rainfalls have caused an increase in their numbers. Eggs are deposited on the inside wall of a container and when rainfall fills the container, the eggs hatch and begin development. It takes only 5-7 days for mosquito development from egg to adult. Residents are urged to survey their yards for any containers that will hold water and discard them or store them where they will not collect water. These mosquitoes will only fly about 50 yards from their breeding site, so if an individual is experiencing a problem with them, the source is close by. Spraying is effective, however, it is only short lived unless the containers are removed or stored so they will not collect water.

Last week a total of 40,960 acres were aeriually treated in the Mandeville, and Slidell areas, while truck spraying was employed throughout the Parish.