



## **TUSCOLA COUNTY MOSQUITO ABATEMENT**

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**Press Release – July 13, 2009**

**Jenifer Robb, Tuscola County Mosquito Abatement Director**

The spring of 2009 has been an extremely wet one. So far this year, Tuscola County, on average, has received 200 percent more rainfall when compared to an average year. Excessive rainfall has led to standing water in normally dry areas. Unfortunately, standing water provides ideal conditions for mosquito breeding to take place and results in many more mosquitoes than in a normal year. Again, because of excessive rainfall creating an abundance of breeding grounds, the mosquito population is extremely high this year. This may turn out to be the most difficult year to combat mosquitoes since the program began in Tuscola County. It is simply impossible this year to be as effective at combating the unusually large numbers of mosquitoes compared to a normal year. Saginaw, Bay and Midland mosquito abatement programs are reporting they are also having difficulties keeping up with this year's tremendous rise in the number of mosquitoes.

Mosquito abatement has two basic types of treatment. The first is done during daylight hours and is known as larviciding. This type of treatment targets mosquitoes in their immature stages while they are living in standing water, keeping them from becoming biting adults. The second type of treatment is what most people associate with mosquito abatement, night time spraying. This type of treatment is known as adulticiding. Adulticiding is conducted in the evening and at night because this time of day is most effective and efficient at getting the pesticide to the targeted adult mosquitoes. Beneficial insects, most notably the honey bees have returned to the hive and are not present when adulticiding control measures are applied at night and generally do not suffer the fatal effects of the spray.

In response to the explosion of the mosquito population this year, the number of trucks on the road completing night time adulticiding treatment has been increased substantially compared to recent years past. We are also extending the hours of the night time spray shift. The technicians driving these trucks complete a set number of yard treatments each evening and then treat from the roads on truck mounted sprayers. Most townships have had this type of road treatment conducted four times so far this season with more treatments planned. This type of treatment is the most effective and beneficial to the largest areas of the county and will continue to be the primary emphasis of the program. This is the same method of treatment used by the nearby counties that also have mosquito abatement programs.

Many people like to have their yards sprayed. We have had thousands of requests for this type of treatment this year, but are limited as to the number of requests that we can complete each evening. This type of treatment only kills the mosquitoes that are in the yard at the time of treatment. It does not continue to kill mosquitoes after the truck has left or prevent them from coming in from neighboring properties. Spraying from the roads on truck mounted sprayers covers a larger area making it much more effective in reducing the number of mosquitoes, county wide, versus spraying a single yard.

This year even with the increased number of trucks on the road, we have many more mosquitoes than in the past. The difficulty in combating mosquitoes this year is not due to any policy changes in the program, but simply due to the excessive rains and the tremendous increase in mosquito populations. Be assured that our technicians are working very hard to reduce the mosquito populations in all areas of the county and will continue to do so.