

MEMORANDUM

TO: Public Health Officials, Mosquito Control Officers, and Policymakers

FROM: Beyond Pesticides/National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides

DATE: March 2002

SUBJECT: **National Mosquito Management Strategy**

Mosquito-borne diseases are quickly spreading throughout the country. Citizens are afraid of these potentially fatal illnesses, and public officials are often pressured into ordering broadcast pesticide spraying because it is a quick and obvious response. To assist policymakers in solving this dilemma, we have worked with public health officials, mosquito control officers, and environmental health groups to develop a strategy that protects the public from both mosquito-borne diseases *and* the pesticides used to kill mosquitoes.

We recommend a national mosquito management strategy that emphasizes community education, prevention, and monitoring methods for both mosquito-borne illnesses and pesticide related illnesses. While we do not recommend spraying pesticides, if a community decides to do this, it is important that they spray responsibly. First, they should notify the public in advance so they can prevent exposure to dangerous chemicals. Second, pesticide operators should be properly protected and trained on when, where, and how to spray.

This report also explains why it is necessary to develop mosquito management policies that reduce the reliance on toxic chemicals. Thousands of people become sick from pesticide exposure each year. We constantly receive inquiries from concerned citizens about pesticide spraying near their homes, schools, organic farms, and other sensitive areas.

While many counties have good intentions, their policies and programs are dangerous and inadequate, and rely too heavily on spraying pesticides to kill adult mosquitoes. We often receive reports claiming that counties spray irresponsibly, for nuisance mosquitoes, or when they find dead crows. In response to these concerns, this report also discusses the low efficacy of using pesticides to kill adult mosquitoes, and the facts about West Nile virus, St. Louis encephalitis, and dengue fever.

As our knowledge of these diseases and the prevalence of mosquitoes grow, elements of this strategy may change. We will need your input! Please feel free to contact Beyond Pesticides to provide suggestions. You may contact us at (202) 543-5450.

Beyond Pesticides/National Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides (NCAMP) is a national environmental health organization that promotes safer pest management practices and advocates public protection from pesticides.