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LMCA District News

April 2012

Message from the President

Austin, Texas hosted the 78th AMCA Annual meeting from February 26th through March 1st. Those of you who have attended an annual meeting know that this is an excellent venue by which valuable information is exchanged. The Austin meeting was no exception. Several topics of importance were the various states' compliance requirements with NPDES, Integrated Pest Management, and larviciding products and methods.

As you know, mosquito control is constantly evolving and part of your job as a mosquito control professional is to know the regulatory changes and the new methods being developed by other districts. Of course, many of the new techniques and methods of mosquito control may not be applicable in your district, but it helps to know what is working in other states or districts. The Louisiana Mosquito Control Association is committed to helping you stay abreast of the changes in mosquito control, both regulatory and operational. To that end, the LMCA Spring Workshop was held in Pineville on March 13th-15th. Workshop attendance has dropped since the peak of West Nile Virus in Louisiana, however the importance of the information passed along in the Workshops has not declined. A number of attendees also stayed to test for their 8a pesticide applicator's license. Congratulations to those who passed!

I read this week that cities in 25 states broke records for average daily temperatures for the month of March. Whether that translates into a hotter summer is anyone's guess, but we all know that it meant more mosquitoes than many of us have ever witnessed in March. Record gas prices and beginning the season so early does mean that our budgets will be stressed in 2012. But knowing Louisiana's mosquito control professionals, I have full faith that you are prepared to meet the challenges that this year will present.

Billy Noegel
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Ascension

This year, 2012, is the first year that APMC has begun this early to have night time target spraying. The largest part of this was due to the many rain showers we have been experiencing. APMC began an early surveillance this year starting out with ten gravid traps and ending with fourteen. The team began to notice oddities in the female to male mosquito ratios. These traps were set in the morning, with fish oil being the attractant and the trap was emptied of mosquitoes 24 hours later. The following is a small sampling:

Sample	Female	Male
1	1700	122
2	648	12
3	1583	56
4	402	8

The sampling however did not show a slowing of the population of the mosquitoes, as there were just as many or more in the month following the samples. APMC is still in the process of going "green" by raising mosquito minnows (*Gambusia affins*). These minnows are being raised in a 150 gallon "horse trough" during the summer and a 50 gallon glass aquarium during the winter. There were several ditches of the parish where many larvae were found but had no minnows. Mosquito minnows were taken from the tanks being used to raise these "weapons" and were released in these ditches. Last year at one location four minnows were released in a ditch where there were no minnows. The latest inspection of this ditch showed hundreds of minnows, all within one year.

Caddo

2011 in Caddo parish was the slowest year on the books. Drought conditions, high heat, and no positive pools combined to make it that way. 2012 has been the exact opposite. Temperatures were warmer than normal in January and February. Due to high larval counts we decided to start our CO2 surveillance program early. We collected high numbers of *Culiseta inornata* and some *Aedes vexans*. In early March, we had heavy rain that caused a huge outbreak of *Ae. vexans*. As mosquito populations increased along with the warmer temperatures, a high number of public complaints were received. We had to scramble. Our seasonal people usually start in early or mid-April, but with the amount of mosquitoes and complaints we had to start using them in the 2nd week of March. By mid-March we had most of the people onboard and we started to spray in some areas. Rainy weather in the evenings hampered spraying in some areas. The majority of the complaints are coming from the rural wooded areas. In urban areas complaints have been low, with 95% of the mosquitoes collected being *vexans*. *Ae. albopictus* has started to show up in the urban areas. I attended the AMCA in Austin, it was an excellent meeting. I got a chance to fellowship with many members of the LMCA and listen to some great presentations. I hope everybody has a great year and maybe things will slow down.

Calcasieu

It was a very unusual start to the mosquito season this year. In January and February we had *Ae. sollicitans* landing rates of 50 to 100 per minute in residential areas. Poor weather conditions and wind hampered most control efforts. This produced frustration for us and the public. When we were able to adulticide, control was short lived as new waves of mosquitoes continued move in from our southern marsh habitats.

There were numerous mosquito stories circulating around. In early March people traveling in Cameron Parish were stopping their vehicles to clean windows. **Reagan Cook**, Cameron Parish Pilot, made an emergency landing after an airstrike through a column of mosquitoes blocked his vision through the aircraft window. **Josh Hightower**, Director of Cameron Parish Mosquito Control, called me one morning and reported new born calves were dying due to high mosquito populations. We discussed the possible reasons for the bizarre mosquito problems we were experiencing.

Perhaps last years drought played a part by making large portions of marsh habitat available to floodwater mosquitoes? Reagan said he flew over areas of marsh he had never seen dry before. Add warm temperatures, high tides and rainfall to complete the perfect mosquito breeding recipe.

Our mosquito population graph for March resembled the spring of 2006 after Hurricane Rita in the fall of 2005. I asked Jill to compare the light trap collections and service request calls for the two time periods. To our surprise we set two new records from January through March. Mosquito populations and service requests were the highest recorded in the last 20 years for this 3 month time period. The second and third place time periods were the spring months following Hurricane Rita and Ike. We'd have to dig around more to compare earlier years, but this is one to remember.

Hemisphere Satloc G4 systems have been installed in our Ag-Wagon and Britten Norman-Islander aircraft. The AIMM-20AG meteorological probes will soon be installed also. We are looking forward to using the aerial spray optimization systems in the near future. Thanks goes to **Jerome Gueringer** and **JR Clarke** for all their hard work helping complete this project.

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Cameron

After having a somewhat easy 2011, thanks to the drought conditions, 2012 started off like some gangbusters. Due to warm temperatures and frequent rains this winter we did not get much of a break this winter. Beginning in early January we had mosquitoes in astronomical proportions. Landing rates of *Ae. sollicitans* were consistently 20-100 per minute parish wide on a daily basis for most of January and February. New Jersey light trap collections were like nothing experienced before. This winter we have had 16 trap collections of over 30,000 *Culex salinarius* with six of those collections catching over 80,000, and the highest catching 164,864 mosquitoes. I have learned to divide down to 1/4096 very quickly to be able to estimate the number of mosquitoes being caught in these traps. If having the marsh go from dry cracking dirt to being completely flooded is not bad enough, let it happen during a mild winter and see how bad it can get. It is hard enough to get a handle on mosquito populations of this magnitude when the weather is good. It is really bad to have to try to get results in the winter when you are fighting against cool nights, fog, rain, and wind. We had to adapt to the conditions that we were facing to get any control. It was either make changes or have mosquitoes take over Cameron Parish. We changed our low temperature cutoff for spraying from 55 degrees to 50 degrees as stated on the label as the lowest temperature spraying is allowed. We also started our ground and aerial treatments 2 hours before the sunset for a few weeks to beat the fog and cool nights. We had great success on getting a handle on *Ae. sollicitans* by starting late in the afternoon but we did not put a dent in the *Culex* mosquitoes. However, just by eliminating the day time biters the complaint calls were nearly eliminated. Once the weather pattern changed we have been able to resume more normal spraying times between sunset and midnight and we are now getting good kills of all mosquito species. We have been spraying on a regular basis since January 5, and we have already made 267 ground treatments and 15 aerial treatments this year through March. Over the last few weeks, mosquito populations have been pretty low and we are enjoying this break for as long as possible. Hopefully they will remain low for a little longer to catch up on a few more fishing trips.

EBRPMARC

We have been experiencing an abundance of *Aedes vexans* earlier than normal this year as rainfall and a warm winter has taken it's toll. We have had to hold our foggers training early and get our trucks on the road sooner than expected. Our inspectors have been on mandatory overtime, and of course they love that because it means more **"lajan"** for them. Our part time employee's are back at work, and boominators are spraying road side ditches.

The phrase "March Madness" has taken on an entirely different meaning for mosquito districts in Southern Louisiana. For us, "March Madness" means the beginning of the annual floodwater mosquito tournament featuring *Ae. vexans* as the number one seed! In East Baton Rouge Parish, the popularity of this tournament has increased the number of home mosquito requests from 352 CDC weeks 5-8 to 2,053 CDC weeks 9-12. The New Jersey Light trap counts increased for the same weeks from 3,859 to 13,824. The single night's highest collection of 3,478 *Ae. vexans* was on March 1st. So as you can see March Madness was alive and well here, but we are letting the clock run down for that last minute bug beater because in East Baton Rouge Parish we are never afraid to just Choot'em!

On the rodent side of the house, our requests have been sometimes low and sometimes high depending on rainfall. The more serious problem lies with the availability of bait. The Environmental Protection Agency is requiring those of us who distribute bait to residents to now use disposable bait stations. Additionally, our rodent contract is out of flux and it is uncertain how soon it can be corrected.

The Islander, plane, is down as we wait for a new strut. This need was discovered during our annual inspection. The new Islander has been ferried from England to Florida for painting and mounting of the pods. We anticipate aerial operations will be at full capacity by late May. Our ground fleet of trucks has been operating already, as mentioned, before with little mechanical problems. **Lewis Combs,** our Night Spray Supervisor along with **Nathan Tircuit**, our Spray systems Supervisor, have held their annual training session for the drivers and operations have been running smoothly.

We are anxiously awaiting word from our board as to the selection of our new district director. We understand that the large field has been narrowed down and that we should get word by next month. **Dr. Martha Littlefield,** President**, Dr. Lane Foil, Ms. Katy Westbrook, Mr. Harold Kirby, and Mr. James Womack** are the Board of Commissioners that will make the final decision.

Another personnel issue has developed because raises were given to our shop personnel and inspectors, but not our clerical office personnel. As a result we have asked our clerical office personnel to take the 8A mosquito applicators test, so that we

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might separate them from the other clerical workers classification and give them a raise as well. We are proud to report all have successfully passed the **8A**. Congratulations to **Audrey Harrell, Dominick Cable,** and **Ashley Spears.** We still have some hurdles to overcome, but we are confident about our direction.

Several employees attended and instructed at the LMCA spring Workshop in Pineville. Entomologist **Randy Vaeth,** Mosquito Control Specialists **Larry Hudson,** and **Michael Morganti** were part of hands-on section of the program. Also, **Randy Vaeth** and **Guy Faget**, along with Spray Systems Servicer **Louis Square**, attended the Gulf Coast Fly-In held in Lake Charles at the airport.

Marcus Goss has been promoted from Inspector I to Inspector II. He will now supervise the Inspectors along with **Emmanuel Osagie**. We welcome two new Inspectors: **Adrienne Smith** and **Nealisa Lindsay**.

Orleans

We are settling into our new facility and have been able to host a number of recent events including the LMCA Director's Meeting, in addition to meetings and trainings for city employees. We have also resumed our monthly seminar series.

The light winter and early spring did not leave us with much down-time this year. Early March brought large broods of *Cx. salinarius* in outlying areas and *Ae. vexans* in large urban parks. *Cx. quinquefasciatus* population increases have also been early and rapid, with gravid traps numbers already high in April. Buck moth caterpillars were also early to emerge and generated public concern as the infestations were heavy in certain areas of the city. The Formosan termites have also just begun to swarm.

Luckily, we have welcomed a number of new inspectors and are looking forward to having a great group of summer interns with many returning from previous summers. Our new pilot, Ed Foster, is planning to have our Britten-Norman Islander in spray mode by the end of the month.

We are continuing increased monitoring for *Ae. albopictus* and *Ae. aegypti* by placing ovitraps along the riverfront and in areas with high urban density. This summer we are partnering with Dr. Dawn Wesson at Tulane University and Dr. Gary Clark at USDA on the Rutgers University Asian Tiger Mosquito (ATM) Area-Wide Project. The aim of this project is to develop cost-effective and sustainable methodologies for mosquito abatement districts to control this species. We are excited for the opportunity to incorporate new larvicides, adulticides and perhaps new techniques into our program.

Ouachita

The calendar year 2011 was a quiet year for Ouachita Parish mosquito abatement efforts in relation to disease in both humans and mosquitoes. For the year ending 2011, there were no reported or confirmed cases of West Nile Virus, either fever or neuro-invasive, and no human cases of either St. Louis or Eastern Equine Encephalitis. There were two confirmed local cases of EEE in horses through DHH. One case was found in a horse in eastern Ouachita Parish in mid-July, and the other case was found in a horse in Union Parish right across the river (parish line) from Sterlington in August.

With regards to diseased mosquitoes, the year was surprisingly quiet. Zero out of 771 pools submitted in 2011 to the LSU Arboviral Testing Laboratory in Baton Rouge tested positive for West Nile with zero being positive for SLE or EEE as well.

Though 2011 was considered a drought year, we did experience a wet spring and fall with intermittent rains throughout the summer in various locations. The rains in the spring did cause a hatch off of nuisance mosquitoes early in the season. Intermittent rains caused an increase of mosquito populations in specific locations throughout the summer. Fall rains continued to produce mosquitoes, but in lower numbers. The numbers of these nuisance mosquitoes throughout the season were not enough to warrant extra control measures.

2012 has already proven to be a more exciting year with all of the rain that has fallen within the past weeks. We began our adulticiding program on April 16 which is approximately two weeks ahead of our usual start date. We also began the season with a higher ground ULV application rate to help battle the above average mosquito populations. Our potentially prolonged spray season (weather and surveillance dependent) will be evaluated throughout the year considering fuel costs. We are also beginning to perform in house bottle bioassays to test for resistance to resmethrin and prallethrin/d-phenothrin. We will continue with our cage tests of the aforementioned chemicals throughout the summer. Good luck to all in the 2012 season!

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St. Tammany

As with most other Districts, the mosquito season began much earlier than usual due to the above normal temperatures throughout the winter coupled with timely rainfalls and high tides. One weather report stated that the month of March for the New Orleans area was 8 degrees above normal, and the warmest March on record. Since mid-February, the parish has experienced several broods of floodwater mosquitoes that included *Ae. vexans, Ae. sollicitans, Ae. atlanticus,* and *Psorophora ferox.* Quinks, *Cx. salinarius* and *Anopheles crucians* have also been at above normal levels. In late March the area received 7-8 inches of rainfall over a three day period. Larval inspections indicate that the floodwater brood from this rainfall will be the largest so far. Our six part-time larvaciders returned to work the first of February; and since then the quink populations have decreased, however they are still slightly above normal for this time of year.

The Islander has been used often so far this year, especially since we have the Aztec for sale and are not using it. We set a record for most acres sprayed aerially for March and would have been more if several scheduled treatments were canceled due to excessive winds and fog. It seems the bad weather has put us in the position of having to "catch up" for the past month.

We are awaiting completion of the refurbishing of a Beechcraft King Air that we will purchase from Dynamic Aviation. The aircraft will be have mid time turbine engines with an external spray tank capable of holding 100 gallons of chemical. The aircraft is expected to be completed by mid April. I am sure that we will have it in operation very shortly afterwards.

Tangipahoa

The mild winter and heavy rainfall in March and April have combined to get the mosquito season off to an early start in 2012. We have seen high traps counts of Ae. vexans, Cq. perturbans, An. crucians, Cx. nigripalpus, and Ps. ferox. Our night spray operations began in mid-March (again).

We have been working through the off season with Leading Edge Associates in the development of our MapVision system, which should be deployed in early May. We are excited about the capabilities that this new system should offer us. More to come on that later...

Our District once again participated in the Master Gardener Fair at the Hammond Research Station. Colby Colona and Bill Shaw were on hand at our booth to inform the public on what they can do to eliminate mosquitoes around their home.

National Mosquito Control Awareness Week 2012

Each year the week of June 26 is declared National Mosquito Control Awarenss Week by the American Mosquito Control Association. AMCA's "Mosquito Week" educates the general public about the significance of mosquitoes in their daily lives and the important service provided by mosquito control workers throughout the United States and world-wide.

National Mosquito Control Awareness Week 2012
June 24-30, 2012

Here are a few ideas how you can get the word out:

- ✓ Distribute a press release
- ✓ Contact your local radio station and offer to be a guest expert
- ✓ Contact your local elementary school and offer to talk about mosquitoes
- ✓ Contact your local girl scout or boy scout troop and offer to teach about mosquitoes
- ✓ Hold an open house at your district

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Membership

Today the LMCA is a support arm for these operations, those smaller city/community operators and all others interested in mosquito control. We provide a platform for educational resources and opportunities through publications, meetings and workshops, as well as guidance and technical direction for those in need. Association leadership works closely with state regulators to assure competency within operations and vigilance on legislative matters. Through this we are able to uphold our mission of enhancing the quality of life through the suppression of mosquitoes for all here in Louisiana.

- ♦ E-Newsletters
- ♦ Workshops
- ♦ Annual Meetings
- ♦ Lower rates for meeting registration
- ♦ Technical Advisory Services
- ♦ IPM Training
- ♦ Educational Resources
- ♦ Legislative/Regulatory Monitoring
- ♦ Technical Manuals / Bulletins