

MOSQUITO CONTROL WORK IN MARYLAND

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Mosquitoes and their control are of great concern to many people in Maryland, especially those living in tidewater communities. Outdoor living in many communities becomes difficult and at times impossible during mosquito season. The farmer, his help and his livestock, are adversely affected. Stockmen and dairymen suffer great financial losses. Agricultural workers lose efficiency and at times refuse to work because of mosquitoes. Development in recreational and resort areas is frequently hindered and real estate values are often depressed as a result of mosquitoes.

Organized mosquito control based upon state appropriations earmarked for mosquito control is new in Maryland. The first such appropriation was made available and effective beginning July 1, 1956. However, work for the control of mosquitoes is, of course, not new in Maryland. Since the turn of the century limited work has been done in various communities throughout the state for mosquito control. During the early thirties, which were depression years, extensive work for the control of mosquitoes was done through the Civil Works Administration and the Civilian Conservation Corps. With the Civilian Conservation Corps over 15,000 acres of marsh were ditched by constructing over 3,000,000 linear feet of ditches. Since World War II many cities, towns, and communities throughout Maryland have operated mist blowers and fog machines for temporary relief from mosquitoes.

In 1939 the first law applying directly to mosquito control was passed. That year the General Assembly of Maryland empowered the State Board of Agriculture to do mosquito control work. Under these enactments the State Board of Agriculture through the State Entomologist or its duly authorized officer or agent is authorized

and empowered to make inspections, investigations, and studies to the extent to which funds are available for mosquito control work. The Act authorized the construction and maintenance of ditches, dikes, dams, and other facilities as well as authority to place or spread such insecticides as may from time to time be desirable or necessary to control or eliminate mosquitoes.

The State Board of Agriculture through the State Entomologist or duly authorized officer is also authorized and empowered to receive from any county, municipality, or special taxing district, in the state, funds for use in mosquito control work. The Act further authorizes contracts with any county, municipality, or special taxing district with respect to work or construction in connection with mosquito control. In addition, the State Board of Agriculture through the State Entomologist or its duly authorized officer or agent is authorized and empowered to acquire in the name of the state such property, easements, and other rights as it may from time to time deem desirable and necessary to carrying out the provisions of the law pertaining to mosquito control. Authority for purchase or condemnation is also provided in the law. The State Board of Agriculture is also authorized to accept aid, gift, or loan as may from time to time be made available by the government of the United States or any agency thereof for the purpose of carrying out the provision of the Maryland law.

As already noted, the first statewide appropriation for anti-mosquito work was made by the 1956 Legislature. The budget carrying the appropriation reads, in part, as follows:

“. . . at least \$213,690 shall be made available specifically for mosquito control and for no other purpose, and shall be expended for such control work through-

out the State only under the following conditions:

(a) Temporary work for the alleviation of acute annoyance by mosquitoes, . . . shall be undertaken only upon the condition that the municipality or special taxing area involved shall agree in writing to defray at least 50 per cent of the total cost of such temporary work, and

(b) Permanent work, such as upland ditching, marsh ditching, filling, and the like, shall be undertaken only upon the condition that the municipality or special taxing area involved shall agree in writing to defray at least 25 percent of the total cost of such permanent work.

(c) The determination whether any such work is of temporary or permanent character so as to fix the amount of the contribution by the municipality or special taxing area involved shall be made by the State Entomologist and the Dean of Agriculture, or by some other official designated by the State Board of Agriculture."

CONTROL WORK IN 1956. Mosquito control work under the appropriation just mentioned was started promptly on July 1. Eighty-two cities, towns, populated communities, and recreational areas in eleven counties requested participation and co-operated in the mosquito control program. All of these communities were sprayed and fogged periodically throughout the summer for relief from mosquitoes. During the first three months of operation a total of 5,815 miles of street was treated with

84,900 gallons of spray mixture. This would represent the spraying of approximately 125,000 acres. In addition to the above, considerable spraying and fogging were done with local equipment but no records were kept of actual street mileage sprayed.

It was estimated that a population of over 100,000 permanent residents and over 1,000,000 summer transients in resort areas benefited from these treatments. The results from these insecticide applications were very favorable according to reports received from residents as well as studies based on catches made in mosquito traps before and after spraying.

In addition to the spraying and fogging work just mentioned, a number of projects involving upland ditching and marsh ditching are now under way. However, such operations require extensive preparation. Surveys must be made taking into consideration the best type of operation, the cost of the project, its maintenance, effects on wildlife, number of people benefiting, the extent of mosquito breeding in the area, and many other factors. Some of these preparations have been made, others started, and many remain to be made.