

THE HUMAN SIDE OF MOSQUITO CONTROL

a news release by

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Most people think of mosquito control as a simple thing. It's just a case of going out and killing the larvae and that's all there is to it. It goes far beyond that. In a well regulated organization such as exists in many communities in this country the well informed executive and company worker must be capable of pitching in to many different duties. He

must be, to a certain extent, engineer, publicity director, employer and employee at the same time, complaint adjuster, chemist, photographer, mechanic, entomologist, inspector, navigator, title searcher and advertising expert.

The engineering problems which arise in mosquito control work are numerous, unusually interesting and sometimes complicated. In the first place vast systems of ditches must be laid out in the most economical and efficient way. These ditches are of varying width and must be deep enough to drain the water off the affected area and sometimes require digging to a considerable depth. Some trenches run for long distances and must be perfectly straight. The leads must be laid out in a regular pattern. After the construction work is carried out, each system must be laid out on paper giving the length and location of each and every ditch.

In addition to this there are other engineering problems which arise. Culverts often have to be lowered and exact grades are necessary. Tide gates and sluice boxes of various sizes have to be installed requiring expert knowledge of tidal conditions. Dams are constructed to insure the success of the tide gates. In many cases it has been found advisable to straighten and lower stream beds which requires a survey of the entire river to determine grades and courses. In some communities the dredging of good sized rivers has been resorted to in order to affect proper drainage of the adjacent country side. The question of filling in low areas often comes up with its problem of dikes, grades and where to get the material. There are many other engineering features of mosquito control work too numerous to mention.

In order to carry out all these engineering projects, machinery is required such as dredges, pumps, bull dozers and cranes. These are in addition to the regular fleet of trucks and tractors which must be kept in repair. Most Commissions maintain a fully equipped shop for the maintenance of rolling stock.

The publicity department of a Mosquito Commission is most important. This department deals in public relations. It puts the case of the Commission before the public. Publicity is given out in several ways. Lectures before Rotary Clubs, Chambers of Commerce, Women's clubs and other associations are very effective. These lectures are often accompanied by motion pictures showing the progress of the work. Another method used is to publish in the newspapers. The newspapers have been very cooperative in giving space and writing editorials to help the good work along. Annual reports are also helpful in furthering the understanding by the people of mosquito control problems. These reports represent a considerable amount of work, require careful editing and where cuts are used, the work often goes into photography and drafting.

Complaints must be handled quickly and diplomatically. It is often difficult to explain the presence of mosquitoes and care must be taken to satisfy the person making the complaint and at the same time not promise the impossible. Most complaints are about mosquito annoyance but some-

times they concern crickets, which have nothing to do with mosquito control.

There are many other lines of endeavor with which the mosquito worker must be familiar. He is not only employer but is also employee as he not only employs labor but in turn works for his Commission and is often required to sell governing bodies the idea of making appropriations. He must be somewhat of chemist in order to be able to mix the various larvacides and repellants. A large amount of inspection work is necessary and navigation of boats is often necessary. In some Commissions the law requires that the name and boundaries of all properties where work is to be performed be advertised. This requires laborious title searches.

One of the most important branches of mosquito control is entomology. Along the eastern seaboard, there are some forty different species of mosquitoes to be classified and studied. A competent entomologist must be able to quickly identify the adult and larva of each species. He must be able to state the habits, flying range and probably breeding place of each so as to guide the inspectors in looking for troublesome areas. In fact entomology is the core of the whole set up.

This article does not set out to claim that every mosquito worker must have detail knowledge of all these branches of control. Each Commission has its specialists who confine their work to their own department. But every executive should have a working knowledge of all of them and the other workers should be familiar with as many of them as possible as they are often called on to work outside their own particular department. Altogether the mosquito worker is a versatile person. He is engaged in useful and interesting work. We hope after reading this article that the general public will appreciate the effort its servants, in mosquito control work, are making to keep the citizens of their communities free from annoyance and disease.