



National Alliance for Informed Mosquito Management

Problem

In this time of emerging mosquito-borne diseases and of greater understanding of the negative impacts of pesticides, we are dealing with two public health issues. One is the threat of mosquito-borne diseases, such as West Nile virus (WNV), and the other is the wide scale exposure of the public to hazardous pesticides used to combat mosquito-borne threats. In too many municipalities across the country, there are inadequate mosquito management policies in place. In some cases, a coherent management plan does not even exist. As a result, there is often a heavy reliance on mass spraying of pesticides to kill adult mosquitoes. This method of mosquito management is widely considered by experts to be the least effective and most risky response to this important public health concern. There is no credible evidence that spraying pesticides used to kill adult mosquitoes, also known as adulticides, reduce or prevent WNV incidents or illnesses. In fact, communities that do not generally use adulticides as part of their mosquito control often have lower cases of WNV than their neighbors that do. Pesticides used in the battle against mosquitoes have been linked to numerous adverse health effects including asthma and respiratory problems, dermatological reactions, endocrine disruption, chemical sensitivities, and cancer. Adulticides can also be harmful or fatal to non-target wildlife. There are much safer and more effective ways to manage mosquitoes and protect the public from mosquito-borne illnesses like WNV than the spraying of adulticides.

Mission

The national Alliance for Informed Mosquito Management (AIMM) is a group of organizations and individuals working in their communities to protect the public and the environment from unnecessary exposure to hazardous pesticides used in the attempt to control mosquito-borne diseases. By working with communities, experts, and public officials, the Alliance informs about the hazards of pesticides and calls for the adoption of safer, least-toxic methods of managing mosquitoes and the threats of mosquito-borne diseases like West Nile virus (WNV).

AIMM Members*

Beyond Pesticides
B.U.R.N.T., TN
Californians For Alternatives to Toxics, CA
Citizens Campaign for the Environment, NY
Citizens for Pesticide Reform, CO
Coalition Against Pesticide Damages, CO
Colorado Pesticide Network, CO
Concerned Citizens for Safer Mosquito Control, TX
Gateway Green Alliance, MO
Informed Choices, LA
Jack B. Richman Environmental Coalition, IL
Maine Environmental Policy Institute, ME
Maryland Pesticide Network, MD
National Center for Environmental Health Strategies, NJ
New Jersey Environmental Federation, NJ
New York Public Interest Research Group, NY
No Spray Nashville, TN
Northwest Coalition for Alternatives to Pesticides, OR
Ohio Coalition Against the Misuse of Pesticides, OH
Pennsylvania Clean Water Action, PA
People Against Chemical Contamination, MI
Safer Pest Control Project, IL
Sierra Club, National Headquarters, CA
Texans for Alternatives to Pesticides, TX
Toxics Action Center, MA
Vermont Public Interest Research Group; VT
Washington Toxics Coalition, WA
Wyoming Outdoor Council, WY
Xerces Society for Invertebrate Conservation, OR

**Individual members not listed.*

Platform

Reduce WNV Incidence. AIMM promotes rational, effective, least-toxic mosquito management techniques that simultaneously reduce the incidence of WNV and protect the public and the environment from exposure to hazardous pesticides. There is no credible evidence that spraying pesticides meant to kill adult mosquitoes actually reduces or prevents WNV-related incidents or illnesses. Therefore, their use results in the unwarranted exposure of the public and the environment to hazardous pesticides.

Practice Effective Mosquito Management. AIMM insists on the adoption of effective, transparent mosquito management strategies that focus on public education, monitoring and surveillance, source reduction and least-toxic larval control. Targeting adult mosquitoes with pesticides kills only a negligible percentage of mosquitoes, does not affect mosquito-breeding habitat, can result in pesticide resistance, and is widely acknowledged as the least effective strategy to reduce mosquito populations.

Protect Human Health and the Environment. AIMM advocates for targeted mosquito management practices that cause the least amount of non-target exposure. Pesticides can affect much more than just the target pest. They are linked to adverse health effects including asthma, endocrine disruption, and cancer, and can be harmful or fatal to wildlife, such as bees and other beneficial insects, fish, birds and aquatic ecosystems. Very little is known about long-term effects of low-dose, cumulative, combined, or synergistic exposure to pesticides.

Defend Vulnerable Groups. AIMM demands the protection of vulnerable populations unfairly endangered by the use of adulticidal pesticides. The elderly, children, fetuses, and people with respiratory conditions, immune deficiencies and chemical sensitivities have a greater risk of pesticide poisoning and suffer disproportionately from the spraying of adulticides. The welfare of endangered or susceptible wildlife, pets, and organic crops must also be protected.

Safeguard Human Rights. AIMM supports each person's human right not to be exposed to pesticides unwillingly or without their knowledge and to protect his or her health and well-being by exercising a precautionary approach to pesticide exposure. Therefore, members of the community must be given the opportunity to exempt themselves from exposure to pesticide sprays and pesticide drift.

Ensure the Public's Right-To-Know. AIMM insists that, if pesticides are to be used, decision makers involve and fully inform the public in advance and maintain accessible public spray records. The public has a right to know when and where spraying will occur, what pesticides will be used, the potential hazards of the pesticides, ways to avoid exposure, and whom to contact in case of illness from exposure.

This platform is based on the fundamental fact that there is no guarantee or consensus, either scientific or otherwise, that spraying adulticidal pesticides reduces the incidence of WNV nor that low-dose exposure to pesticides is safe from causing acute or chronic harm to human health and the environment.

Overarching Goals

Adoption of Integrated Mosquito Management (IMM). Adopt local plans that protect the public from mosquito-borne disease and pesticide exposure by developing and implementing safe, effective, and least-toxic integrated mosquito management (IMM) strategies. Effective IMM strategies emphasize public education, monitoring and surveillance, source reduction and prevention, least-toxic larval treatments, biological and mechanical controls. Only after exhausting these strategies is it acceptable to consider the targeted use of adulticides.

Support for Sustainable Action.

Empower communities, experts, and decision makers to work together to develop and implement a local WNV Response Plan that stipulates effective IMM methods and criteria. Quality response plans ensure that: (1) least-toxic and preventive methods are employed; (2) progressive steps with pre-specified actions and criteria are taken; and, (3) the public is adequately notified, advised and/or

involved. Effective response plans include consultation with a local task force that involves community representatives and experts alongside government, and mechanisms to monitor even subtle pesticide-related incidents to ensure that public health and environmental problems are not exacerbated.

Ensure the Public's Right-To-Know. Ensure that people have a right to know the mosquito management practices in their community and the criteria that might trigger the spraying of adulticides. Should adulticides be used, members of the community must be notified of when, where and what pesticides may be used and how to avoid exposure prior to application and be given the opportunity to be exempt from being sprayed. The employment of buffer zones to protect from pesticidal drift is critical.

**AIMM promotes least-toxic
mosquito management techniques
that reduce WNV and protect the
public from exposure to pesticides.**

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