

NEWS RELEASE

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Aerial Spraying, CDC Study Underway in County

Aerial spraying of five areas of St. Johns County for mosquito control purposes will begin tonight (Monday) at 6:45 p.m. and continue through the night and early morning hours. The spraying is being done as the result of a request made by the Anastasia Mosquito Control District to FEMA for spraying to relieve the impact of increasing mosquito populations following Hurricane Frances. Reducing the local mosquito population is desirable to reduce the risk of human exposure to West Nile virus and St. Louis Encephalitis, as well as the potential exposure of horses and other mammals to Eastern Equine Encephalitis.

Spraying will be conducted by a King Air Twin Turbo Prop airplane contracted by the Florida Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services (DACS). The pesticide agent to be used is Dibrom (naled), an adulticide that is commonly used within the state of Florida for aerial spraying to kill adult mosquitoes. The chemical has been found to have few risks for adverse health effects in humans, wildlife and the environment.

In correlation with the spraying, the Centers for Disease Control (CDC), assisted by the Florida Department of Health, is conducting a pre and post survey of residents of the areas being sprayed. According to a CDC description of the study, it is being conducted to "find out if people are getting mosquito spray in their bodies because of the spraying to kill the mosquitoes..."

The CDC will obtain written pre-and post-spraying surveys and urine samples from 210 randomly-contacted individuals within the spraying areas. The data will determine the levels, if any, of pesticide present in the body and any effects noted by the study participants. The data from St. Johns County will be added to similar studies conducted in other states to become the basis for a published report on the effects of Dibrom.

Mike Towle, Environmental Health Manager with the St. Johns County Health Department, said the aerial spraying was already scheduled by the DACS, and the CDC study was offered to the county because St. Johns County was on the schedule for spraying this week. "There was a very short turnaround on this effort. CDC was in the state and wanted to conduct the study this week but the area previously scheduled to participate in the study had to withdraw at the last minute," said Towle.

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Attachment: Map of St. Johns County Aerial Spaying Zones