

Questions/Answers Regarding Mosquito and Human Testing Through the Texas Department of State Health Services

Question 1

Who may submit mosquitoes to the Department of State Health Services (DSHS) Laboratory for arboviral testing, e.g. West Nile virus (WNV)?

Answer

DSHS supports a mosquito surveillance network for arboviral diseases (WNV among them). This network includes:

- Established vector control programs in Texas that submit mosquitoes to DSHS rather than do their own testing
- Only surveillance network members should submit
- DSHS can process a limited number of mosquito pools per week
- Priority must be given to supporting the current network of submitters and active mosquito-control intervention efforts
 - Control measures for larvae and adult mosquitoes applied by local jurisdictions
 - Aerial application of pesticide by DSHS contractors

Question 2

How can my area's mosquito-surveillance program help the DSHS maximize the public health benefit of the testing capacity?

Answer

Once there is a positive mosquito pool reported from a location

- Resubmit from the same location only if there is an active control measure
 - Allows assessment of the success of the intervention
- If no active intervention is to take place following identification of a positive mosquito pool
 - Use community education to give residents the tools to reduce risk
 - (FAQ) at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>
- To define the area of WNV activity, place traps at least 1 mile from a previously-identified positive trap

Question 3

What should I do if there is no mosquito-surveillance program in my area?

Answer

Assume that the risk of WNV exposure exists throughout Texas from the time positive mosquitoes are first reported until cases are no longer reported

- WNV has recurred seasonally in Texas since 2002
- During that time, virus activity has been reported in 238 of the state's 254 counties

- Take precautions to minimize your risk (Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) at <http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/>)

Question 4

What should my local authorities do about testing mosquitoes for WNV if there is no surveillance system in place here?

Answer

- Establish a cooperative agreement with another jurisdiction that has a surveillance program
- Establish a surveillance program
 - Plan for beginning in May of 2013
 - Contact the DSHS Regional Zoonosis Control Program in your area for information
<http://www.dshs.state.tx.us/idcu/health/zoonosis/contact/>

Question 5

Can human testing be submitted to the DSHS Lab?

Answer

- West Nile testing for human specimens is readily available from commercial and private clinical laboratories. DSHS recommends that you follow your normal process for requesting testing of human specimens (i.e., if you send specimens to a local laboratory for clinical testing, please continue to do so).