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Aerial Mosquito Spray Operation Scheduled in Wake of Flooding

The rain left behind by Hurricane Harvey has created large areas in Harris County where mosquitoes can lay their eggs. To address increasing numbers of mosquitoes and the risk they pose to the recovery effort and public health, the U.S. Air Force Reserve's 910th Airlift Wing flying modified C-130 cargo planes staged out of Kelly Air Force Base in San Antonio will be conducting an **aerial spray operation beginning Thursday evening, September 14 and may take more than one day.** The plan is to spray approximately 500,000 acres by air, weather permitting. **(See attached map for the proposed spray areas.)**

Harris County is working with our partners at the Texas Department of State Health Services (DSHS) and the U.S. Air Force Reserve to conduct the aerial spray operation. The coordinated approach supplements the on-going countywide ground treatment to better protect the health of Harris County residents.

According to Dr. Umair A. Shah, executive director of Harris County Public Health (HCPH), "The goal is to reduce the effects mosquitoes are having on recovery efforts and the possibility of a future increase in mosquito-borne disease."

The insecticide, Dibrom (EPA-approved), is routinely used for aerial spray operations to combat mosquito-borne disease and will be used during the spray operation in Harris County. Dibrom is considered safe for the environment and is applied by licensed applicators, according to the label instructions.

For residents concerned about exposure during the aerial spray operation, HCPH recommends individuals stay indoors during the evening aerial application in the treated areas, as a precaution. As an extra precaution, beekeepers may wish to cover their colonies to prevent bees from exiting during treatment.

Residents can help control mosquitoes during the recovery effort by emptying standing water around their homes. To reduce the likelihood of being bitten by mosquitoes, residents are encouraged to use an EPA-registered mosquito repellent when outside. To keep mosquitoes out of the home, people should make sure their window and door screens fit tightly and are in good condition.

HCPH is the local public health agency for the Harris County, Texas jurisdiction. It provides a wide variety of public health activities and services aimed at improving the health and well-being of the Harris County community.

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