

The current wet weather and standing water has provided “perfect” conditions for mosquitoes. The three primary strategies that must be implemented to avoid mosquito problems and bites are: source reduction, personnel protections and insecticides.

#### Source Reduction:

It is important to routinely eliminate or reduce all mosquito breeding sites. This will effectively decrease mosquito populations by removing stagnant or standing water from items or areas that may collect water. These include: wheelbarrows, pet food or water dishes, saucers underneath flower pots, empty buckets, tires, toys, wading pools, birdbaths, ditches, and equipment. In addition, check gutters regularly to ensure they are draining properly and are not collecting water.

#### Personnel Protection:

Protect yourself from mosquito bites by delaying or avoiding being outdoors during dawn or dusk when most mosquitoes are active. Use repellents that contain the following active ingredients: DEET or picaridin. Generally, DEET provides up to 10 hours of protection whereas picaridin provides up to 8 hours of protection. A product with a higher percentage of active ingredient will result in longer residual activity or repellency. For children, do not use any more than 30% active ingredient. Furthermore, do not use any repellents on infants less than two months old. Clothing can be sprayed with DEET or permethrin. However, be sure to wash clothing separately afterward. Before applying any repellent, always read the label carefully.

#### Insecticides:

For stationary ponds, there are several products that may be used, such as Mosquito Dunks and/ or Mosquito Bits. Both contain the active ingredient, *Bacillus thuringiensis* subsp. *israelensis* which is a bacterium ingested by mosquito larvae that results in death. The bacterium only kills mosquito larvae with no direct effects to fish or other vertebrates. Avoid making area-wide applications of contact insecticides because these are generally not effective, and may potentially kill many more beneficial insects and pollinators (e.g. bees) than mosquitoes.

The following items will not control mosquitoes:

- Mosquito repellent plants (citronella plants)

- Bug zappers

- Electronic emitters

- Light traps or carbon dioxide traps.

*Alicia Boor is an Agriculture and Natural Resources agent in the Cottonwood District (which includes Barton and Ellis counties) for K-State Research and Extension. You can contact her by e-mail at [aboor@ksu.edu](mailto:aboor@ksu.edu) or calling 620-793-1910*