

The Meigs County Health Department assists in the management and control of mosquitoes throughout the county, as well as surveillance of mosquito-borne illnesses that could potentially spread to humans. To aid in mosquito management and surveillance, the Health Department applied for the 2024 Ohio Environmental Protection Agency's Mosquito Control Grant, which \$24,942.00 was awarded.

The grant funding allowed the Health Department to contract with a Mosquito Control Technician, who assisted with the collection and testing of mosquito populations at various locations throughout the county. Different types of traps were used to catch various species of mosquitoes from May through August. Weekly location logs and informative articles were documented and posted to social media for Meigs County residents to view. Every Thursday, the preserved mosquitoes were sorted and shipped to the Ohio Department of Health's Laboratory where they were tested for potential vector-borne diseases, including West Nile Virus. During the season, 113 traps were set, resulting in over 1,100 mosquitoes collected and sent for testing. There were mainly five (5) different kinds of mosquitoes identified resulting in four (4) locations testing positive for West Nile Virus. Additional surveillance was completed in the locations where West Nile Virus positive mosquitoes were collected. The Culex mosquito, otherwise known as the common house mosquito was collected the most. This mosquito needs very still water to lay eggs on which can be found in a variety of natural and man-made containers such as ditches, failed sewage systems, storm drains, non-chlorinated swimming and wading pools, decorative ponds, bird baths, flower pots, buckets, clogged gutters, abandoned tires, and water-retaining junk and debris. To reduce the number of mosquitoes homeowners should prevent water from accumulating in containers or, at least, empty water out of them on a weekly basis.

In addition to the contractor, the Mosquito Control Grant also allowed the Health Department to purchase mosquito control supplies, including a variety of different insect repellents, mosquito larval dunks that could be applied around residents' homes, and information pamphlets about how to prevent mosquito breeding grounds around their homes. All of these items were put together to make three hundred (300) mosquito safety kits, which were distributed to the public during outreach events, including 'Kid's Day' at the Meigs County Fair, during nuisance complaint investigations regarding mosquitoes, or directly from the office if requested.

Since one of the Health Department's most important goals in mosquito management is larval control, the reduction of breeding grounds was a large consideration when applying for this grant. Tires that are not properly kept can result in water collecting inside, creating the perfect breeding grounds for mosquitoes. To reduce the amount of scrap tires in the county, the Health Department requested grant funds to be used to obtain three (3) tire trailers throughout the 2024 grant period. The third tire trailer is still being filled at this time, but 1,632 tires have been collected to date since the start of collection at the end of May 2024. You must be a Meigs County resident to bring scrap tires for disposal. Come into the Health Dept. during business hours (Monday-Friday 8AM-4PM) with your photo ID.

Finally, the Health Department has submitted for 2025 Mosquito Control Grant funds to continue the efforts to protect the public from mosquito-borne disease. For more information, contact 740-992-6626.



Steve Swatzel, REHS
Director of Environmental Health