

mosquito control



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Mosquitoes—mostly bothersome, potentially dangerous. Controlling these insect pests, and thereby protecting Delaware citizens and visitors from the ravages of mosquito-borne diseases, is another of the many non-highway responsibilities assigned to the State Highway Department.

In its work during the year, the Mosquito Control Division used aerial spraying throughout the State, a fog machine for the smaller communities in Sussex County, and ditching for permanent control where feasible—principally in Kent County.

Delaware mosquitoes were particularly energetic throughout the year.

A record 337,666 acres were sprayed with BHC, at a cost of \$61,733 for spraying plus \$53,552 for spray oils and insecticide. However, tentative plans to pelletize some of the hydraulic fill areas in the upper part of the State were forestalled by continuously wet terrain.

Using its own force of three machine operators and 15 laborers, together with contract labor, the division dug, cleaned, or maintained 265,043 lineal feet of ditch by machine and 783,317 by hand. Expenditures for ditching were \$33,834 in salaries and wages, and \$189,070 for contract employees.

The ditching of all breeding areas in the State is the goal of this long range program following the proven CCC program.

As in the past, two valuable allies of the Division were the United States Air Force and the Entomology Department of the University of Delaware.

During the summer of 1957, the Air Force sprayed 13,000 acres. In 1958, Air Force coverage was restricted to about half this area to avoid damage to potato crops.

Late in 1957, both the Mosquito Control Division and the Air Force noticed an apparent drop in the effectiveness of BHC against both adult mosquitoes and larvae in this area. Research by the Entomology Department of the University early in 1958 confirmed these findings, and led to the decision, shortly after the close of the fiscal year, to discard BHC as the standard insecticide in Kent and Sussex Counties, and to use the more expensive Malathion.

The final noteworthy development of the year was the decision to relocate the Mosquito Control Division's operating and administrative headquarters at Milford because of its more central location and also the high maintenance costs in the present Lewes buildings. The Jackson Airstrip north of Milford has been leased for 10 years for use by the Division's spray planes, and an adjacent 2.2 acre site acquired for the headquarters.

