

Mosquito influx projected in area

By John Miller

Staff writer

Four to five generations of mosquito eggs will hatch this year, according to estimates revealed at a meeting mapping out mosquito control strategy held Friday at the Goshen County Weed and Pest Control District office.

"The good news is nearly all are floodwater mosquitoes that don't carry disease," mosquito surveillance specialist Cory Gilchrist said. "The bad news is they bite really hard."

Goshen County received a \$115,000 Emergency Insect Management Grant from the Wyoming Depart-

By the numbers

\$115,000
State grant

34,000
acres treated

9

2003 West Nile deaths

ment of Agriculture to assist in combating the mosquitoes. Additionally, the county contributes \$10,000 from a portion of the extra penny sales tax, as

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well as up to \$2,499 from the Ft. Laramie Historic Site.

"Everyone who asked for mosquito money got it," Goshen County Weed and Pest Control District supervisor Steve Brill said. "We're at the top of (the state's) list after what happened a few years ago." Officials will trap *Culex* mosquitoes, the primary carriers of West Nile virus, and test them throughout the summer with trapping sites set up at 18 different stations tested on alternate weeks.

Goshen County had nine deaths due to West Nile virus in 2003, the highest death rate per capita due to the virus in the U.S.

The heavy precipitation this spring is making it a banner year for mosquitoes as old tires, ornamental ponds and hundreds of other objects that hold water make ideal breeding grounds.

"I was out by Ft. Laramie and I found a cow print with about an inch of water in it and probably 300 larvae, out in the middle of a pasture all by itself," Gilchrist said.

"Anything that holds water, dump it," Dennis Grubbs, city of Torrington facility maintenance technician said. "If you want to keep that old tire, put a spoonful of salt in it. Mosquitoes can't live in salt water."

Brill and others are also relying on killifish, a native fish, for bio-

control purposes because of their appetite for mosquito larvae. And while Goshen County doesn't have the agricultural clearance to import them, they are able to trap and relocate the fish to areas that need help within the county.

GCW&P will also once again furnish larvacide briquettes for the public to help control the insects. Depending on the size of the body of water, one briquette will keep the water free of mosquito larvae for 20 days. Briquettes, and information on how to implement them are available at the Weed and Pest Control station just north of Port of Entry on Highway 26.

Although 34,000 acres will be treated by airplane, the sheer volume of expected mosquitoes is forcing Brill to focus extensively on municipalities. GCW&P will fog every town except LaGrange, Yoder and Torrington. The chemical used, biomist, is FDA approved and safe for people. Those who wish to know the fogging schedule for their area, or have their residence marked as a no-spray area call 532-3713.

Torrington will begin its fogging the night of June 12, Monday through Friday from 6 p.m. to 10 p.m., and will concentrate on areas sampling high in *Culex*. Those who wish to know when their area is scheduled for fogging or have their residence marked as a no-spray area call 532-5666.