DATE

The Mosquito and Vector Control Association of California (MVCAC) is comprised of approximately 70 mosquito control and public health agencies throughout the state that are charged with protecting the public from vectors and vector-borne diseases. Our member agencies are on the frontlines of mosquito-borne disease prevention and are facing increasing challenges due to the spread of invasive species.

Invasive *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes were detected in California in 2013 and are now in over 20 counties throughout the state ranging from Shasta County in the north to San Diego and Imperial Counties near the Mexican border. California mosquito control districts are working hard to prevent the further spread of *Aedes aegypti* and protect the public from the viruses they can transmit, including Zika, dengue, chikungunya, and yellow fever.

One of the main challenges with controlling invasive *Aedes* aegypti is that they are becoming increasingly resistant to available public health pesticides. Even identifying the mosquito habitat can be difficult because they lay their eggs in small, cryptic sources. Due to the difficult nature of controlling this species and the public health risk it poses, mosquito agencies need new control methods.

Many MVCAC members are exploring the use of Sterile Insect Techniques to complement other control methods to reduce the population of disease-transmitting mosquitoes. As such, we encourage the EPA to approve Oxitec's amendment to its Experimental Use Permit (EUP) to bring its Friendly™ *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes to California.

A number of MVCAC's member agencies have expressed interest in evaluating Oxitec's non-biting male Friendly™ *Aedes aegypti* mosquitoes as a potential way to safeguard public health. We are encouraged that the EPA approved Oxitec's technology for a pilot project in the Florida Keys and by extending the EUP, mosquito control agencies in California will have the ability to assess this emerging technology to determine the control potential in local communities.

As California mosquito agencies seek additional effective and innovative control strategies that can be used as part of an Integrated Vector Management approach, we welcome the opportunity to evaluate Oxitec's technology and determine if it is an efficacious mosquito control tool to protect public health.

Sincerely,

Truc Dever
President