

Mosquitoes Force Farmers To Wear Masks in Illinois

By MORT J. SULLIVAN
United Press International
Stonefort, Ill. — (UPI) — Venomous hordes of salt water mosquitoes are forcing farmers to wear masks outside, keeping children inside and even stampeding cattle around this tiny southern Illinois community.

"Be Alert . . . Mosquitoes Crossing," reads a sign one Stonefort farmer tacked up in front of his home.

Around Stonefort, a town that's about as mosquito-ridden as the Panama Canal Zone, folks don't tell fish tales. They tell "skeeter" stories.

"They (the mosquitoes) are out for the blood of everything that moves," complained farmer Ralph Beasley who is suing Williamson county because of the buzzers. "My cattle are sometimes stampeded," he said.

Farmer Loren Nolen wears a wire-mesh hood along with his overalls, leather jacket or raincoat, and gloves — "even in 100-degree weather."

The problem of swatting, slapping and smacking mosquitoes (it's not a sport) has become so bad, it has reached the governor's desk. A bill up for his consideration appropriates \$10,000 for the state public health department to deal directly with the Stonefort 'skeeters.

This Isn't Funny
"A lot of people think this is funny," said the bill's author, State Rep. C. L. McCormick of Vienna. "But these mosquitoes have cut milk production by harassing dairy cows." And much more.

Farmer Charles Curtner said "It's so bad the kids can't get out in the yard to play."

Farmer Beasley, who owns a modern home, farms 80 acres of land and is principal of a grade school, said "Some people would like to sell their property but can't because of the mosquitoes." He and other Stoneforters believe the strip mines in the area are to blame.

The area in the southeast corner of Williamson county is pock-marked with strip mine soil banks and ponds which the farmers say are ideal breeding places for the "aedes sollicitans," more commonly known as the salt water mosquito.

"We didn't have mosquitoes until the coal companies came in," Curtner said. "Nothing has made me want to leave this country more than this. The mosquitoes are thicker than flies used to be when files were bad."

"There's nothing we can do but fight and kill them," he said.

A celebration of sorts was held recently when Beasley — using a device which attracts mosquitoes with black-blue lights and then draws them through a fan into a sack — bagged 2½ pounds. He said the device — a Luralight — will clear one acre of 'skeeters per night.

But during the hot months of June, July and August, the humming plague just presses on in its relentless task of unnerving every other living thing around.

Marian Poggas, health educator for the Franklin-Williamson bi-county health de-

partment, said residents of nearby West Frankfort and Zeigler in Franklin county also have their mosquitoes.

Drainage Costly
Poggas, a Zeigler resident, said surveys by the state recommend draining the swampy areas where mosquitoes breed or to spray the areas with a mixture of kerosene and insecticide. But that takes money and Stonefort doesn't have it.

Harvey J. Dominick, state entomologist, made a study of the Stonefort 'skeeters and promised he would make recommendations on what can be done in the area.

Williamson county does not have a mosquito tax, and funds ordinarily are not allocated for that purpose. Some cities within the county have a mosquito abatement district, like Lerrin. Other cities, like Stonefort, do not.

Breed in Mines
What this means is that rural Stonefort residents don't know whom to ask for help.

Stonefort is the only area of those making mosquito complaints where strip mining occurs.

West Frankfort and Zeigler both have shaft mines where the waste is brought to the surface and deposited in piles

called "gob" piles that are ideal breeding places.

In Stonefort the "gob" is spread like butter on bread.

Some areas of the strip are decorated with evergreen trees and other foliage. But Beasley, who has a land devaluation suit pending before the Williamson county board of review, feels the effort "is only a token measure to satisfy the government."

"It's one thing to cover up an area with foliage," he said, "but to correct the situation is another." Beasley's suit charges that strip mining operations in the Stonefort area, combined with increased mos-

quitoes, have rendered his farm and home less valuable.

What about the bill awaiting Gov. Off. Kerner's signature?

"We're delighted to think that something is going to be done about the mosquitoes," Beasley said. "They're not something like flies that you can walk out to the barn and kill them by spraying or swatting them. One person can't do it."

"I wouldn't care if they killed every sprig of grass if they killed the mosquitoes," said Curtner of a proposal that the state spray more of the area.



POSIE SNIFFER—Young Charlie Weaver of trouble with his britches as he stoops Jr., son of Mr. and Mrs. Charles Weaver of Miami, Fla., seems to be having a bit (UPI)

Dennis the Menace



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Servicemen Said Desegregation Tools

Washington—(UPI)—Rep. F. Edward Hebert (D-La.) has accused the administration of using servicemen as a "tool" in its desegregation campaign.

In a speech prepared for delivery on the House floor, Hebert attacked a defense department order authorizing military commanders to make communities discriminating against Negroes "off limits" to servicemen.

Hebert termed the order "economic blackmail." He said it would also mean that servicemen would no longer have the right to determine how they will spend their off duty hours.

Hebert said that until "now" servicemen felt that they belonged to an organization that existed to provide security for the nation. Instead, Hebert said, the military now has become a political tool "of the attorney general, the President and the secretary of defense."

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