Local Environmental Health Professionals and Their Role in Tick-Related Activities

Andrew Ruiz, MSPH, BCE
Health Scientist, CDC
aruiz3@cdc.gov
Water, Food, and Environmental Health Services
Georgia Mosquito Control Association
October 16, 2019
Why should we care about tick-borne disease?

76.5% of reported vector-borne disease cases between 2004 and 2016 were tick-borne.

Expanding Range

7 New or introduced tick-borne diseases
EH professionals make up a significant portion of the vector control workforce\textsuperscript{2,3}

- **EH Programs**: 35%
- **Mosquito Control Projects**: 27%
- **Public Works**: 20%
- **Other**: 10%
- **Other Health Departments**: 5%
We assessed EH programs in nine states—eight local programs and one tribal program
Key informants shared information in two ways

Pre-interview questionnaire

Interview
We asked EH professionals to identify

- Level of involvement in tick activities
- Best practices and the resources they use
- Any unmet technical assistance and resource needs
Participant snapshot

Out of the 9 respondents,

8 Reported that they have been engaged in tick activities for at least 5 years

4 Reported increase in community interest in tick-borne disease

5 Reported that ticks were a priority in their community

7 Reported that they do not receive dedicated tick funding
Community education was the most common tick-related activity reported by participants.

- Community Education
- Passive Surveillance
- Response to Citizen Complaints
- Reponse to Tick-Related Disease
- Active Surveillance
- Inspection
- Pesticide Application
- Code Enforcement
Surveillance activities reported by participants

- Passive surveillance of ticks on humans
- Identify ticks
- Tick dragging and flagging
- Testing ticks for pathogens
- Passive surveillance of ticks on pets
- Passive surveillance of ticks on wildlife
Participants reported resource challenges

- Funding and staffing
- Routine tick surveillance
- Access to human case information
- Process to train staff on tick-related concerns
Participants reported success in surveillance, partnership, and community engagement.

Even on a small scale, surveillance provides valuable insight.

Internal and external partnerships can strengthen tick programs.

Community engagement leads to better understanding of priorities.
References


Thank you!

Always willing to answer questions!

Contact me at:
aruiz3@cdc.gov

For more information, contact NCEH
1-800-CDC-INFO (232-4636)
Follow us on Twitter  @CDCEnvironment

The findings and conclusions in this report are those of the authors and do not necessarily represent the official position of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.