

# City skeeter program could see boost

BY JASMINE FRANKLIN, EDMONTON SUN

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**The city may bump up its mosquito budget. (LAURA PEDERSEN/EDMONTON SUN)**

The city's mosquito control program is caught in a win-lose situation that could leave Edmontonians suckers.

During a community services committee meeting on Monday, the decision to review and potentially expand mosquito control later this fall seemed put the program in a winning position.

But that winning feeling was short-lived after local bug expert, Mike Jenkins revealed Edmonton's main, anti-mosquito product would run out as soon as next year.

Dursban is known to be one of the most effective products for killing mosquitoes and comprises 90% of Edmonton's program. But Dursban's manufacturer has stopped making the product and come 2014, it will no longer be available.

"It is our primary insecticide for larvae control — this could definitely reduce the effectiveness of our program," said Mike Jenkins.

"(Next year,) if we use all the Dursban at the rate we did this year, we could use all that we have left."

This could leave Edmontonians with an itchier future than ever, should a winter of heavy snowfall and a wet spring produce a large number of mosquitoes as seen in 2011.

As an alternative, the pesticide B.t.i is being considered, however, Jenkins says it is far less effective, does not work at low temperatures and has zero residual effects in still-standing water where larvae are rapidly produced.

This could potentially push the mosquito control program months behind schedule.

"It's not nearly as effective and probably more expensive," said Jenkins.

The future of funding for the mosquito control program will be reviewed during the 2012 budget deliberations later this fall.

The program could receive a boost within the same year it was cut by \$194,000.

Because of funding cuts and helicopter contract provisions, the City was limited to use only two helicopters for 344 hours of spraying logged in 2011.

A re-tendered helicopter contract could allow for the use of three helicopters in 2012.

From 1995 to 2007, the city had access to four helicopters, but following drought years and a lack of helicopter use, it was cut down in 2007 to only two helicopters, reducing minimum hours from 300 to 250.

With the reduced hours, the city's contractor could no longer guarantee three helicopters would be available for an on

The review of funding will explore options to re-tender a helicopter contract in 2012 for an increased minimum back

The control program went over budget this season by 94 hours. At rates of \$1,389 per hour, that's an additional \$130

In 2011, a total of 14,000 hectares was treated by helicopter — three times the amount of land covered in 2010.

The committee recommends an unfunded service package be drawn up to outline the funding requirements for incre

spraying to either a minimum of 300, 350 or 400 hours.

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