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## **Hyde County Health Officials Urge Residents to Take Precautions Against Ticks, Mosquitoes**

**Swan Quarter** – Health officials in Hyde County today emphasized tips for the county’s residents to follow to prevent tick- and mosquito-borne diseases because warm weather creates an environment for mosquitoes and ticks to thrive.

“Recent rains and warm temperatures leave a friendly breeding environment for mosquitoes and ticks,” said Wesley P. Smith, Director of the Hyde County Health Department. “Residents need to know that they can make their yards less friendly for disease-carrying insects as well as know what they can do to prevent being bitten.”

This May, the focus is on education and prevention of tick and mosquito bites. Mr. Smith added that the Hyde County Health Department is joining the state’s Divisions of Public Health and Environmental Health in promoting the simple measures people can take to ward off ticks and mosquitoes.

The Hyde County Health Department offers the following tips for making homes and yards less mosquito- and tick-friendly:

- Keep grass short, and remove plants that attract animals like deer and rodents;
- Pour out any standing water, and remove any containers that can hold water;
- Keep gutters clean and in good repair;
- Repair leaky outdoor faucets and change the water in bird baths and pet bowls at least twice a week; and
- Check window and door screens.

“North Carolina summers are wonderful; it is just important to remember to take precautions while working or playing outdoors,” he said.

Exposure to both mosquitoes and ticks can be limited by wearing long-sleeved shirts, long pants and socks. Avoid being outdoors at dawn and dusk if possible. This is when mosquitoes are most active. People should also check themselves and their families for ticks when in tick-prone areas.

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention recommend several repellents against mosquitoes – DEET, picaridin and oil of lemon eucalyptus. According to the CDC, oil of lemon eucalyptus should not be used on children under 3. Repellents containing permethrin provide excellent protection against ticks but may only be used on clothing. Consumers should look for products that contain the CDC-recommended ingredients, and should read and follow all label instructions.

For additional information about preventing mosquito and tick bites, go to the following Web sites: [www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/phpm](http://www.deh.enr.state.nc.us/phpm), [www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/arbovirus](http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/arbovirus) and [www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/tick](http://www.epi.state.nc.us/epi/tick), or contact Hugh Watson, Environmental Health Programs Coordinator, at 252-926-4380.