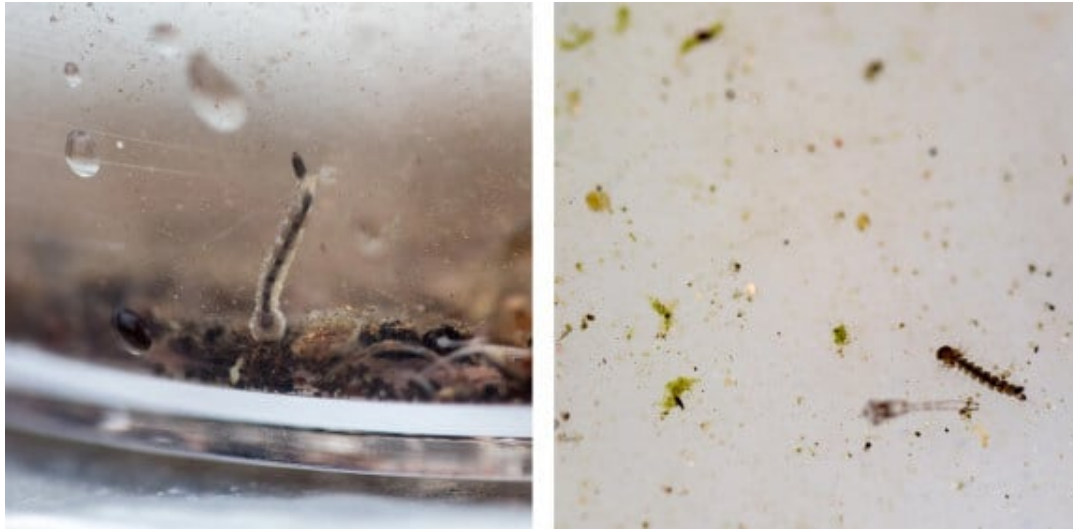


Florida Keys may determine whether GMO mosquitoes will be employed globally to fight Zika

[The mosquito species] *Aedes aegypti* ... lives in residential areas (they love closets, for example) and can lay eggs in dry places, where they will sit dormant until rain comes. They can breed in a space the size of a bottle cap.

The mosquito control district has been in talks for years with Oxitec, a British company that engineered a strain of mosquitoes with a gene that causes the insect's offspring to die before reaching maturity....

Oxitec is now cleared to conduct a trial of its mosquitoes in the United States.



Mosquito pupae to send to a lab. The Mosquito Control District is tracking *Aedes albopictus* in an attempt to stop the spread of another disease-carrying mosquito in the Keys. via 538

... Florida Keys residents...vote in [November] whether to release Oxitec's mosquitoes in Key Haven...Although the vote is nonbinding, three of the five members of the Mosquito Control Board have said they will abide by the public's decision...[which] could have lasting effects in the U.S. and around the world.

The pending vote has raised important and difficult questions that are rippling out to shores far beyond the Florida Keys: How do you judge unknown risk against known risk? How much is enough evidence to say it's safe to deploy a new technology? And when it comes to public health, who should decide what's in the public interest?

[North Carolina State University's Michael Cobb is] frustrated by what he says is false balance from the media..."Press behavior is the worst sometimes.... The surveys all point in one direction: If people are forced to choose, they would say OK."

Wise on mosquito 002

Key Haven in late August, about a third of the homes there featured yard signs that read “No Consent,” the rallying cry of those opposed to the Oxitec trial.

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Board Chairman Phil Goodman ... worries that [a vote] will establish a

precedent of letting the public [decide] on mosquito-control techniques.

Jack Norris, a physician in Key West whose wife, Kathryn Watkins, is running for the Mosquito Control District

Board of Commissioners, said he is concerned that Oxitec mosquitoes will spread antibiotic-resistant bacteria —[yet] the insects cannot survive to maturity without the antibiotic tetracycline, which is used to rear them in the lab. Quincy Perkins is one of the few Keys residents who has spoken publicly in favor of the research...[and] he says a recent online threat directed at his wife and daughter prompted him to call the police.

The GLP aggregated and excerpted this blog/article to reflect the diversity of news, opinion, and analysis. Read full, original post: [Small island, Big Experiment](#)