

## FIRST AID

# Zika virus scare sends repellent sales soaring

By RICHARD MONKS

Barraged by news reports about the impact of the mosquito-borne Zika virus, consumers have been purchasing bug sprays and insect repellents in record numbers.

According to the data analysis firm 1010data, online sales of mosquito repellent during February, March and April hit \$5.9 million, a 323% spike over the \$1.4 million spent during the same period in 2015. Data from IRI, charting brick-and-mortar sales over the 12 months ended May 15, showed a 4.4% increase in the first-aid insect products segment, with total retail sales during the year just short of \$15.2 million.

Suppliers and retailers say most of that increase came in the past few months, and they expect sales to continue to soar as summer progresses. Some suggest that while their particular product will not be sought out by people looking to ward off mosquitos, the Zika scare could act as a sort of tide that lifts all boats.

"You need a repellent to fight off Zika virus," said Jim Creagan, president of Randob Labs, which markets Sting-Kill, a maximum-strength formula that relieves the pain and itching from insect

stings and bites. "I am sure there is some secondary effect where mosquitoes are top of mind of the shopper, so they may buy some repellent, a citronella candle and some Sting-Kill all in the same shopping trip."

According to the CDC, Zika-carrying mosquitos will flourish in as many as 40 states this summer, and retailers have helped shoppers prepare by offering promotions, educational efforts and ensuring that they have adequate supplies of insect repellent products.

CVS pharmacy, for example, is adding signage to its 4,000 stores and distributing pamphlets on how to combat the disease.

Meanwhile, in Puerto Rico, where Walgreens operates 120 stores, the company has worked with the Centers for Disease Control and the Puerto Rico Department of Health to raise awareness about how residents can protect themselves from Zika virus. In addition, the retailer has cut the price on products that the CDC said can fight Zika. The price reductions ran the gamut from DEET-based insect repellents to condoms, which can prevent sexual transmission of the disease. (See the ECRM Report on page 40 for more information on insect repellents/sunscreens.)

## WHAT'S HOT

### Sting-Kill ends pain, itching of bug bites, stings

CORNWALL, N.Y. — While summer means backyard barbecues and other outdoor activities, it also means having to deal with pesky mosquitos and insects, sending consumers across the country in search of an effective way to ward off these pests and deal with their bites.

Over the past year, one of the options that people turn to ease the pain of insect bites has been Randob Labs' Sting-Kill. IRI data showed that for the 12 months ended May 15, Sting-Kill sales increased by slightly more than 29%. Randob executives said the brand has been popular because of its unique formula that instantly kills the pain and stops the itching associated with insect stings and bites. Randob Labs president Jim Creagan said the brand also has benefited from increased distribution, a new marketing campaign and redesigned packaging.

"When new category managers are introduced to the product, we get a great reception," he said. "We are expecting big things for 2017."



Randob Labs' Sting-Kill

## Top 10 insect first-aid products

BRAND	SALES*	% SALES CHG	\$ SHARE	\$ SHARE CHG	UNIT SALES*	% UNIT CHG	AVG PRICE	AVG PRICE CHG
After Bite	\$6,097.5	7.9%	40.2%	1.3%	1,446.5	5.1%	\$4.22	\$0.11
Off Insect	1,796.7	27.6	11.8	2.2	382.3	28.1	4.70	-0.02
After Bite Kids	1,549.0	-15.4	10.2	-2.4	377.7	-16.3	4.10	0.04
Private label	1,492.9	9.5	9.8	0.5	205.7	9.3	7.26	0.01
Chiggerex 2x Power	1,103.5	3.7	7.3	0.5	371.6	3.7	2.97	0.00
After Bite Plus	965.6	3.6	6.4	-0.1	196.4	5.7	4.92	-0.10
Cutter Bite MD	486.7	-7.9	3.2	-0.1	147.3	-8.5	3.30	0.02
Chigarid	286.3	-11.8	1.9	0.4	82.3	-14.0	3.48	0.08
Sting-Kill	269.9	29.2	1.8	0.4	76.5	26.7	3.53	0.07
After Bite Xtra	233.3	-4.8	1.5	0.3	63.4	-11.7	3.68	0.27
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>\$15,169.2</b>	<b>4.4%</b>	<b>100.0%</b>	<b>NA</b>	<b>3,609.2</b>	<b>1.0%</b>	<b>\$4.20</b>	<b>\$0.14</b>

\* In thousands

Source: IRI for the 52 weeks ended May 15, Total U.S. Multi-Outlet (supermarkets, drug stores, mass market retailers, military commissaries and select club and dollar retail chains)