

Fly Control... continuing

With warmer temperatures continuing in August and even the early fall, this continues to be an excellent time to focus on preventing the problems caused by flies for cows and optimum production goals. Flies can be costly to a dairy herd (especially replacement heifers) by reducing feed intake at different times of the year. Proper control of flies and their effects can be a challenge for many farmers. Prevention and appropriate treatment depends upon which fly species causes the irritation. Some of the most common irritating flies are:

1. **Horn flies (*Haematobia irritans*)** - this is one of the most serious and injurious pests for cattle, since they are known for transmitting mastitis-causing bacteria. These flies spend most of their time on the animal and take 20 to 30 blood meals a day. The resulting pain and annoyance interferes with feeding, resting and other routine actions of cattle.
2. **Face flies (*Musca autumnalis*)** - face flies are considered to be severe enemies of cattle (and most livestock). These flies spend most of their feeding on mucous secretions from around the eyes and mouth of cattle, while sucking on areas around the mouth. They tend to cause irritation and can spread the bacteria that cause pinkeye.
3. **Stable flies (*Stomoxys calcitrans*)** - the bites inflicted from these flies are very painful. They take 2 to 3 painful blood meals/day, usually on the legs of cattle or other livestock. Stable flies cause cattle to bunch up, stomp and kick.
4. **House flies (*Musca domestica*)** - house flies spend their time feeding on decaying organic matter and spoiled feed. Their eggs are laid in rotting organic matter, such as old hay or manure. This species of flies causes mild irritation to livestock.

Preferred practices for managing fly infestation:

1. **Ear Tags** are recommended for flies that spend most of their time on the host. These flies include the horn flies and face flies. Although ear tags are recommended, farmers need to remember there is a limited lifespan for ear tags. It is suggested to wait for the fly season to attach the ear tags. If you have attached ear tags previously, it might be worthwhile to review the suggested efficacy date and attach new tags. Another tip is rotating between organophosphate and pyrethrin-based ear tags, as it will slow fly resistance to the chemicals.
2. **Pour-on** is a fly control method that may assist in protecting against all species. This treatment is labor intensive and must be repeated often for continued results.
3. **Insect growth regulators (IGRs)** can be used in feed rations to prevent horn fly development in manure.

IGRs should be fed *throughout* the fly season in order to maintain complete control over flies.

4. **Environmental control** is an important element in controlling the house fly population, as well as reducing their nesting environment. Management is key to the success of this approach.
5. Other options for managing flies and problems linked with flies include such things as parasitic wasps, back rubbers and commercially-available traps.



Although these are recommended management practices for controlling flies, the best fly control strategy varies by geographical location, rainfall, stocking density and management. Producers need several different forms of fly control throughout the season to ensure proper control. It is always a good idea to seek advice from your veterinarian and nutritionist for more definite recommendations specific to your operation.

Effectively working to control flies around your cattle and livestock can contribute to improving the health and productivity of your operation, and aid the development of heifers and calves.

(Article by the Dairy Calf & Heifer Association, 2012)

SOLUTIONS FOR SUCCESS!

CONSIDER FALL SEEDING TODAY

Aiding forage inventories now can make a significant difference throughout the coming fall and winter months. Check out available options and be sure to order soon. Suggestions may include such things as TRITICAL or a ryegrass, as well as other products.

NEED SEED & PRESERVATIVE? CALL ME!

Interested in discussing topics in this newsletter, or want to do a better job feeding and managing your cows? Call me!

My goal is to help you. That's Renaissance's commitment!

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THE TEAM FOR RESULTS

Scouting Cornfields

Corn, along with any other crop, can tell you a lot about what is going on. It is a matter of looking and "listening". How often do you walk your fields? Do you take note of what is going on and then seek answers in order to better deal with it? Our consultants and your local extension office can help to provide insights and information.

Take time (and notes) to do things like: measuring planting depth; diagnose insect(s) feeding and pest pressure (i.e. leaf blights, stink bugs, first-generation corn borer, etc.); stand counts; drought-related concerns (tasseling and pollination), curled leaves, etc.; are ears beginning to set; etc.

It is a good idea to try and walk your fields at least three times during the growing season, giving you a balanced perspective of just how your crops are doing. At least you will know what's happening!

Milk Quality Counts!

Milk quality does count. When dairies consistently achieve production of low somatic cell count (SCC) and low bacteria count milk, everyone wins — the cow, the dairy, the processor, and the consumer, says Jeffrey Reneau, University of Minnesota extension dairy specialist. *"Since low SCC cows also produce milk more efficiently, the environment wins too."* Is it worth the time, effort and cost to achieve a low bulk tank SCC? *"My answer is that you can't afford not to and what's more, some best management practices are cost neutral,"* he insists. For example, proper teat dipping takes no more time or product to achieve complete teat coverage than to do a sloppy job. Every study of milking routines in the last 20 years indicates that to achieve optimal milk let-down across all stages of lactation and to minimize machine-on time requires at least 10-20 seconds of quality teat massage (cleaning) and a 60-120 second pre-lag time (time between first initiating teat massage and milking machine attachment). *"Our experience shows that many dairies struggling with high SCC are spending only 5 to 10 seconds average on pre-milking prep time,"* he says. This is neither enough to assure consistent teat sanitation or optimal milk let-down response. Based on cow prep studies, adding just 10 seconds more time cleaning teat surfaces during cow prep for each cow improves the quality of the milk let-down stimulus, resulting in increased milk flow rates, reduced machine-on time, and will not slow down milking time at all. (edited from an article by J. Reneau, as presented in Dairy Herd Network)



DAIRYINFO

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