

Good Time To Get Control Of Lice On Cattle

SPRINGFIELD, MO.

Lice typically start taking their toll this time of year on beef cattle that have not been treated since back in the fall.

According to Eldon Cole, a livestock specialist with University of Missouri Extension, lice come in a variety of species, some are blood suckers and others are biters but they are all parasites.

"Regardless of which type your cattle have, lice

been on the recommended list for years, but they do need to be in areas cattle frequent.

Backrubbers are often the most economical if you already have them. However, Cole says they may not provide as quick and thorough control.

"Farmers now complain about the cost of the diesel or oil that is used with backrubbers is higher than the insecticide," said Cole.

Pour-ons or injectable products are popular if



can cost you lots of money," said Eldon Cole, a livestock specialist with University of Missouri Extension.

Cattle that have an active infestation of lice will suffer loss of gains, lower milk production, and a general rough, unthrifty appearance.

As weather warms and the number of lice worsens, cattle rub on fences, feeders, trees and anything else they can find to relieve the irritation.

"There doesn't seem to be the serious lice problem there used to be thanks to pour-ons and injectable insecticides," said Cole.

Years ago, sprays were the recommended method and they usually required two treatments.

Self-treating devices such as dust bags and back rubbers that contain insecticides have

the cattle are being put through the chute for another procedure. The cost depends on the product chosen and size of animal, but could run less than 50 cents up to several dollars per head.

"The control of lice not only improves the hair coat, it enhances performance of both cows and stockers. This can be worth several dollars when you're marketing your cattle as buyers shy away from lousy looking cattle," said Cole.

Cattle that are rubbing and showing patches of hair loss for other reasons than normal shedding may have lice issues.

To be certain if lice are the cause, Cole recommends running a few head in the chute and examining them closely for either the blood suckers or the biting louse. Δ

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