

Planning Checklist For Pasture Fly Control – 2013



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The price break on early orders is a big incentive to make control purchases well before the pest season begins. Here are a few things to consider as you weight the options and make your decisions on face fly and

horn fly control:

What is your key pest? A key pest is one that is there every year, and when it is bad, causes significant losses in reduced gains and extra expense in time and effort. In Kentucky it is usually either the face fly, and associated pink eye, or the horn fly.

Since face flies and horn flies are around every herd, the one that is consistently the greater problem is the one to build the program around. While most fly control products and approaches are labeled for both pests, there are some differences in effectiveness.

The face fly is the more challenging pest because it spends very little time on animals, mostly on the hard-to-treat face where it feeds on tears, saliva, and mucus. In contrast, blood-feeding horn flies spend most all of their time on the more easily treated sides and back of cattle. Select the control strategy that puts the protection where it is needed.

Consider grazing practices and pasture layout. If cattle are in pastures with controlled access to water and mineral, then forced-used or self-treatment options like dust bags, back rubbers, or automatic spray devices can be economical and effective.

Careful hanging of dust bags or suspending fly-flips or other supplemental treatment devices to ensure treatment of the head and face can give very good face fly and horn fly control. Adjusting the nozzles on automatic sprayers will direct the liquid to the target most effectively.

These self-application systems require some maintenance and their insecticide dispensers have to be checked and refilled as needed.

If animals are moved regularly in a rotational grazing program, then fixed application stations may be less practical. Insecticidal ear tags provide a portable fly control system that moves with the animal. Tags tend to give very good horn fly control and a reduction in face fly numbers per head.

Spray or pour-on insecticides may be practical and very economical for horn fly control if there is a means of gathering up and confining / handling animals about once a month during the fly season.

Past performance. What was your 2012 fly control program? Were you satisfied with it? The satisfaction level can be difficult to judge, especially with drought conditions over much of the state. Face fly and horn fly populations are affected by general weather conditions, especially rainfall. Consequently, fly numbers on cattle can be due as much to weather conditions as product performance.

Resistance management. It's important to consider your long term insecticide use patterns. Continued use of insecticides from the same chemical family can lead to the development of pest populations that are more difficult to control. If you have been using pyrethroid ear tags for several consecutive years, incorporate insecticides with different modes of action into your program. Tags are available with insecticides having one of several ways of attacking the pest, and there are some combination tags that pair insecticides with different modes of action.

There are many options for pasture fly control. Matching products and application methods best suited for your key pest and herd management practices will help you pick an effective strategy. Δ

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