

Ear Tags May Not Be Enough To Control Flies

Spreading horn fly resistance to the pyrethroid insecticides used in fly control ear tags is threatening one of the best fly killers cattlemen ever had. Some livestock advisors hope using an alternative insecticide may keep pyrethroids in the fly control arsenal.

Ear tags are still as good as ever for face fly control. However, cases of horn fly resistance have been documented in 16 states. Livestock specialists say it's time to look at what used to work.

"We never had any trouble controlling flies with organophosphates and dust bags," says John Campbell, extension livestock entomologist at the University of Nebraska - North Platte.

"The ear tags were so convenient that most cattlemen threw away - or at least put away - everything else," he adds. Cattlemen may want to dig out the dust bags and fill them with dust again. In a forced-use situation, dust bags have been shown to be

the most cost effective means of applying insecticides, other than tags. And organophosphate dusts, such as Co-Ral (R), are among the most effective fly killers.

"Where tags are still effective against horn flies, I'd recommend using them alone for fly control until late July or early August," Campbell says. "We'll usually have a peak in both face fly and horn fly populations in August. Adding a dust bag to your fly control program at that time will give a boost in control.

"In addition, if resistance is building in the horn fly population, using an organophosphate insecticide through the fall will significantly reduce the number of resistant horn flies that overwinter.

"Cattlemen who feel they need the ear tags for face fly control should be using organophosphates as well if horn flies have shown any degree of resistance to pyrethroids," he adds.

"We're recommending both tags

and dust bags according to the situation," says Fred Knapp, University of Kentucky research livestock entomologist. "We've put the word out that producers who have used ear tags for fly control for two or more years should consider using an organophosphate insecticide, whether they've seen resistance in the horn fly population or not," he says.

Knapp says there is an advantage to using both ear tags and another form of insecticide application - dust bags, for example - in controlling face flies.

"Studies here and at the USDA research center in Beltsville, Md. have shown improved face fly control when using tags and dust bags together," Knapp says.

While horn flies suck blood from cattle, face flies are a concern only because they irritate eyes and spread pinkeye bacteria.

Dr. Philip Widel, professional services veterinarian for Anchor Animal Health, says that while ear

tags are still effective for controlling face flies, "They shouldn't be counted on to kill more than 70 percent of the face flies in areas where they are a problem, and that's if you use two tags."

The best approach to control pinkeye, Widel says, is to reduce fly pressure with insecticides, and build cattle resistance with a pinkeye vaccine.

Whether you use dust bags alone, with tags, or as part of a pinkeye control program, here are a few pointers to remember:

- Hang dust bags in a gate or

alley leading to water or mineral so animals are forced to use them.

- Introduce the bag slowly by placing it to one side or above the gate at first so cattle aren't blocked from water by the unfamiliar object.

- The bottom of the bag should be five to six inches lower than the average back height of the cattle.

- Repair or replace worn, torn, or frayed bags.

- Check bags frequently and refill as necessary, using Co-Ral or other organophosphate dust.

- Check bag for caking, particularly after a rain.

Junior Angus Association Meets

HARRISBURG - Nominations for candidates and delegates for the National Junior Angus Show highlighted the Pennsylvania Junior Angus Association's meeting at the Farm Show Complex on April 12

The association also announces a field day and sale to be held at Fox Hill Farm on Aug. 8.

The next meeting of the junior association will be held at the home of Jan Waltz, Manheim, on June 7.



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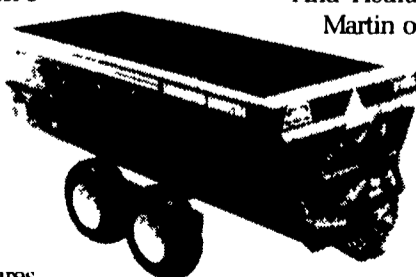
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