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SOUND MANAGEMENT FOR HOUSE FLY CONTROL

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The fly season is here and we must establish sound fly management programs.

Each poultry producer should be aware of the importance of controlling house flies in their facilities in order to have good sanitation in the egg houses and to be a good neighbor to his non-poultry producing neighbors. This relationship to the community is very important to the poultry industry and must be taken seriously.

The spring thaw has finally come and we can get on with our farm chores. One of the big jobs that faces us is removing and spreading manure. Even though we have just completed a very hard winter, house fly maggots have been successful in surviving the winter.

As you haul and spread the manure, remember to spread the manure as thinly and evenly as possible and to deep plow as soon as possible after the spreading. This part of your fly control program is as important as any other part. This practice will certainly go a long way in establishing good neighbor relations.

The first thing the producer should do is to have some method of sampling the fly population so they will know if the fly population is increasing, decreasing, or holding steady. This will allow the producer to evaluate the efficacy of their fly control program.

Methods of monitoring populations of adult flies include fly grids, resting counts, sticky fly paper, baited jug-traps, and spot cards. The most useful in animal facilities are resting counts, sticky fly paper, baited jug-traps, and spot cards.

Resting counts are done by using predesignated areas such as walls, beams, or ceilings and fly counts are made in these areas each day. Several locations are used in each house. By doing these counts over time, you can monitor trends in the fly population.

Sticky fly papers are available commercially. The flies caught on the sticky paper gives a useful index of fly population. Also the flies caught on the paper can be positively identified. Several of these sticky papers should be placed in each house being evaluated. The fly papers should be left in place for two days and then removed and counts made. The number of papers used should be constant and put back in the same place each time. These papers work well but are messy to handle.

Baited jug-traps are a simple, practical fly monitoring device and can be left in place for up to one week to give a continuous sampling of flies. The same trap can be used for the purpose of fly control. The baited jug-trap consists of a one gallon plastic milk jug with four holes (three inches in diameter) cut around the circumference in the upper third of the jug. About one tablespoon of bait containing muscalure is placed in the bottom. Flies enter, feed on the bait, and die in the jug. The number and species of flies can be determined easily. After one week, the bait has reduced effectiveness so the flies and old bait should be dumped and fresh bait added.

At least six jug-traps should be used per deep pit house. The traps should be put in locations where flies congregate and the traps should be put in the same place each time counts are made. In poultry houses, 350 flies per week has been used as the threshold for chemical treatment. However, lower threshold may be desired when neighbors are close.

Spot cards are simple devices for measuring fly activity. These are 3 x 5 index cards which are fastened flush to prechosen locations in the facility. Flies resting on the spot cards leave light straw-colored regurgitation spots and dark fecal spots. The number of spots per card is easily counted after an exposure of three to seven days. The placement of cards is important and they must be placed where flies are observed to rest or fly specks are present. At least 10 cards should be used per facility and an index of 50 spots per card has been used as a threshold for chemical treatment.

These simple methods for monitoring fly populations will aid the producer in evaluating the total fly management program. Remember that good fly management starts with good manure management, which includes good ventilation and no leaky watering cups.

If you would like to discuss this information further, or if you are having problems with fly populations, please call me at (814) 863-7789.

Educators Take Part In Workshop

ALFRED, N.Y. — Dr. Richard A. Hoffman, professor in the Agriculture and Horticulture Department at Alfred State College, was among some 30 educators taking part in an Agricultural Biotechnology Standards trainer workshop in Chicago April 8-10.

Arranged by the National FFA Foundation, the project was a collaborative effort by education, industry, and labor.

The purpose, Hoffman said, was "to identify skills needed by a technician (with less than a baccalaureate degree) employed in an agricultural business, using the tools of biotechnology."

The goal of the workshop was to prepare participants to deliver teachers' in-service programs in their respective states, according to Jeff Moss, project director for the Illinois-based foundation.

Workshop participants shared information on what is happening nationwide with biotechnology and agricultural education, Hoffman said.

The Alfred State professor, a noted authority in the field of biotechnology, described related courses offered at his campus and instrumental materials used by ASC faculty.

Presentations included a description of a model educational program for preparing biotechnicians, staged by Dr. Joy McMillan, director of the Biotechnology Laboratory Technician Program at Madison (Wis.) Area Technical College.