

Program Targets Fly Complaints

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consistent ways" of dealing with complaints such as flies, odors, or dust.

Residents or farmers who would like SWAT to make a call at their location may call Martin's office at (717) 394-6851.

Their calls will be returned as soon as possible and if necessary, an on-site assessment would be made.

The process begins with a response to the complaint within a day. The person filing the complaint may be a farmer, neighbor, or township, he said. Martin

added that a speedy response is important, since to delay is "to add to the problem of goodwill," he said.

Next, the closest SWAT team member to the location of the caller may visit the site to determine the underlying roots to the problem using an assessment tool for both parties involved.

The problem may lie in farming practices or in the homeowner's practices, such as leaving an open recycling bin near a doorway of a white house, said Martin. Additionally, placing an electric fly "zapper" outdoors will attract flies instead of taking care of a problem, as it would if it were indoors, he said.

"Sometimes it takes some detective work," he said.

In addition placing "speck cards" — a white index card tacked to a wooden stake — at strategic locations throughout the neighborhood will help to determine fly activity, said Martin. Regurgitation spots indicate fly numbers.

Next the investigator will suggest ideas for improvement, such as controlling water or feed spillage, checking wet spots in the litter in open housing, and cleaning up after hauling manure.

"You could be hauling your problem to your neighbor's back

door if it's not handled properly," said Martin. He recommended placing a tarp over manure piles for 15 days to reduce the number of larvae which quickly hatch into flies once they are in the fields.

The situation is followed up with subsequent monitoring.

"We learn a lot by work in the pits," he said. Checking for fly activity and what condition the litter/manure piles are in are revealing, according to Martin.

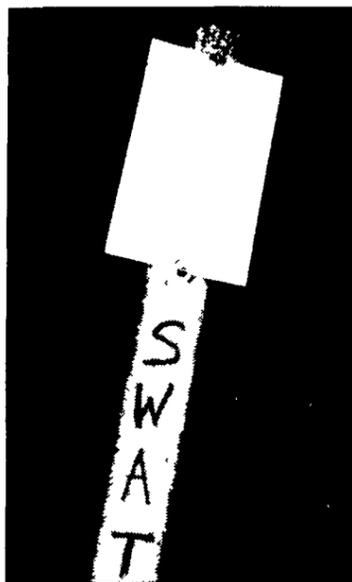
Assessment on the farm includes looking at flock age, litter condition, feed and water changes, or other environmental conditions.

Analyzing the neighborhood means looking at the homeowner's practices or checking to see if another agricultural operation may be contributing to the fly problem.

Studies include watching the results of composting with added hay or shavings inside a deep pit, which produces heat to kill fly larvae.

In the end, said Martin, the SWAT effort is to promote good relationships.

"We need to promote goodwill and be positive about what we do, because we are doing something unique — producing high-quality, low-cost food.



This stake holds a "speck card" that indexes fly activity.

"They (the public) do watch what we're doing, so we should always try to put our best foot forward and show that we care."

For additional help and information, the Pennsylvania Integrated Pest Management (IPM) program can be reached at a toll-free number of 1-800-736-6476 or online at <http://paipm.cas.psu.edu>. The site will be periodically updated with articles.



Featured speaker Gregory Martin, right, capital region poultry extension agent, is joined by Michael Hulet, associate professor, Penn State department of poultry science. Photos by Michelle Kunjappu

Spraying To Control Black Flies Under Way For The 2003 Season

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Eric Conrad, Department of Environmental Protection (DEP) Deputy secretary for field operations, recently announced that aerial spraying to control black flies is now under way.

"As we did last year, we are notifying county emergency management officials prior to spraying that will be conducted in their counties, so they can be sure the helicopters they see flying over creeks, streams and rivers are doing so on behalf of the commonwealth's black fly program," Conrad said. "If any member of the public has questions when they see a helicopter conducting spraying, they can call their county emergency management office to verify that a black fly treatment is taking place in their area on that day."

As always, spraying depends on favorable weather conditions.

Spraying will not be done when it is raining, or if river and stream levels are too high from previous participation. If the water level is too high and the water is moving too rapidly, the material used for the spraying is carried away from the targeted location before it can be effective. Heavy rains last April delayed spraying efforts and initially allowed for a larger population of black flies.

"DEP uses Bti, a naturally occurring bacteria, to control black flies.

This bacteria degrades quickly in the environment, and does not harm the aquatic ecosystem," Conrad said.

On days when spraying is scheduled, it will begin at 7 a.m., weather permitting, and continue until all waterways are completed, or until dark.

For more information about the program, visit the PA PowerPort at www.state.pa.us, PA Keyword: "blackfly."

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Here's something Lancaster Farming subscribers have been waiting for: the 2003 Lancaster Farming Fair Guide booklet, scheduled to premier May 24. Thousands of our readers count on Lancaster Farming to provide them with the latest fair news during the summer and fall season. You can look toward the fairs with this extensive directory, covering an eight-state region. Planned is a list of fairs and fair association news. Will photos of your family turn up in the book from fairs around the region? Check it out!