

Wolfe County

May 2016

Ag Newsletter

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Greetings!

I hope that this new month finds you all doing well and enjoying the warmer weather.

With the warmer weather comes more "honey dos" and outside chores. In this issue you will find information on controlling flies on cattle, mulch, Water Awareness month, choosing housing for small poultry flocks, and a tasty recipe! If you would like any further information on those topics, please contact me at the Wolfe County Extension Office (606-668-3712).

Please look us up on Facebook, and "Like" our page, Wolfe County Agriculture & Natural Resources.

And again, if you have any questions or ideas for programs, let me know!

Be safe, be healthy, and be happy!

Heather K. Graham

"Don't judge each day by the harvest you reap but by the seeds you plant." Robert Louis Stevenson

Controlling Flies On Cattle

Lee Townsend, UK entomologist

Warmer weather brings more pest problems. Horn flies and face flies are key pests of cattle in Kentucky. Both species breed in fresh pasture manure piles but present very different threats and management problems. Fortunately, there are a variety of fly control options.

Horn flies are blood feeders. They remain on animals most of the time, taking 20 to 30 small blood meals per day. More than 100 flies along the sides and backs of each animal every day during the fly season can mean 12 to 15 pounds lower weaning weights for spring calves and poor gains for older animals. The close association between the horn fly and the animal, however, does make many control methods quite effective.

On the other hand, face flies spend about 90 percent of their time resting off of animals and visit them only to feed on liquids around the eyes and face. This makes some fly control methods more effective than others because face flies visit hard-to-treat areas for very short time periods.

One control option is insecticide-impregnated cattle ear tags which release small amounts of an insecticide distributed over the animal during grooming or rubbing. In general, ear tags provide excellent, long-term control of horn flies and some brands also reduce face fly numbers. Another advantage is that animals only have to be handled once.

Read the label before you purchase and use insecticide ear tags. All tags are labeled for beef cattle while only those with certain active ingredients are approved for use on lactating dairy cattle.

For fly control, it is best to tag animals after horn fly numbers reach 50 or more per side. This reduces the chances of developing resistance to the active ingredients that are being used. Normally, tags provide 12 to 15 weeks of fly control. Tagging too early in the season can mean the tags are not providing control in the fall that will help to control the overwintering population.

Another method of control is pour-on products. These are ready-to-use formulations that are applied to animals in measured doses based upon body weight. Horn flies are killed as they land on treated areas of the animal and pick up the insecticide through their body.

Typically, the pour-ons provide about four weeks of fly reduction so they must be reapplied at intervals or used in combination with other methods. The length of control will vary with weather and other factors so treat again when fly numbers build back up to about 100 per side but no sooner than the label instructions allow.

Many cattle producers like to use self-application devices, such as dust bags, back rubbers, or automatic sprayers for pasture fly control. They can be purchased ready-made or assembled from easily found materials. These devices can do a very effective job of horn fly control and may provide satisfactory to excellent face fly control. All require regular inspection and service to be sure that they are working and dispensing properly and may not be as mobile as other fly control systems.

Location is important for these fly control methods. They must be put where animals can use them regularly. The number needed will vary with herd size, pasture area and other factors. The ultimate goal is to get each animal treated regularly.

Horn flies and face flies breed in cattle droppings in pastures. Manure can be made toxic by having animals consume an insecticide that passes out in the manure. Mineral blocks or loose supplements are available which contain fly control products. This method is only a part of a total pasture fly control program because horn flies and face flies will move in from nearby herds. Supplemental control though the use of dust bags or backrubbers is needed to deal with these "fly-ins".

Beef cattle producers have many alternatives for pasture fly control. Cost, effectiveness, past control history and herd management practices help to narrow this list.

Mulch, Mold and Fungi

John Strang, Horticulture Specialist; Paul Vincelli, Plant Pathologist

Mulch can be beneficial in many ways on plant beds, around foundation shrubs and other gardening locations in your yard, but mold can threaten its benefits.

In landscape beds and gardens, mulch helps control weeds, prevent extreme soil temperature fluctuation, decrease water evaporation and improve drainage. Mulch also reduces mower and string trimmer damage on shrubs and trees by suppressing vegetation near their trunks. As it decomposes, mulch produces organic materials to improve soil and otherwise benefit plants.

You need to periodically re-apply mulch to continually get these benefits.

Nuisance fungi occasionally grow on mulch. They include shotgun fungus, slime molds, stinkhorns, earthstars and toadstools.

The shotgun fungus shoots masses of tiny black spore structures onto adjacent surfaces such as vehicles and home siding.

Slime molds are more unsightly than harmful. They don't cause plant diseases and aren't parasitic. Slime mold spores usually appear from late spring to fall. Abundant wet weather stimulates above-ground appearance of these fungi that initially appear slimy but quickly become dry and powdery when converting into spore masses. You'll often see slime molds quickly appear and usually disappear in one to two weeks. They tend to reproduce in the same location every year.

Fungicide use isn't recommended because slime molds aren't harmful.

When mulch hasn't been composted, it might contain fungi that cause plant diseases. This situation is rare, however, and only occurs in non-composted mulch. Plant material fertility problems can arise when fungi in decomposing mulch remove nitrogen from the soil.

Insufficient moisture problems can develop when fungi permeate thick layers of dry mulch creating a surface that's difficult for water to penetrate.

To gain the most benefit, you should use composted mulch with a high bark content and little wood material. Avoid finely ground, woody products that haven't been composted.

If you buy fresh wood chips from a tree-maintenance firm, add water to the chips and allow them to partially compost for about six weeks. If this material doesn't have fresh leaves, you can add some nitrogen to speed up the process. Avoid using fresh or partially composted wood chips near the house foundation because they can provide a food source for termites.

Immediately after you put mulch around plants or trees, soak it with water to enhance bacterial activity to initiate decomposition. Periodically wet mulch during the growing season.

Avoid soured mulch because it tends to injure plants. You can spot sour mulch by its acrid odor.

May is Kentucky Water Awareness Month

*Ashley Osborne, Extension Associate for
Environmental and Natural Resource Issues*

Are you water aware? Do you know how your home and garden water use impacts the water around you? May is Kentucky Water Awareness Month, and that's a good time to think about how what we do affects the health of waterways in Kentucky and beyond.

Kentucky has more than 90,000 miles of rivers and streams. Each stream eventually meets the Mississippi River, either directly or via the Ohio River. That means everything we put into the water can potentially reach as far as the Gulf of Mexico.

A waterway is not only affected by what is flowing into it, but also by what is happening on the land surrounding it. Failing septic systems, illegal dumping, urban development and improper agricultural practices can negatively impact a stream.

When rain falls, it picks a wide range of pollutants. In urban environments, that could include oil, gas, fertilizers, pesticides, pet waste and more.

We can all be more aware around the house and in our gardens. Here are some simple things you can do to make a positive impact on Kentucky's rivers and streams:

- Keep your vehicle in good working condition.
- Pick up after your pet.
- Seed or mulch bare-soil areas to prevent erosion.
- Install a rain barrel.
- Plant a rain garden.
- Never dump anything down a storm drain or sinkhole.
- Sparingly use pesticides and fertilizers.

- Properly dispose of trash.
- Don't dispose of hazardous waste in sinks or toilets.



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Choosing Housing for Small Poultry Flocks

Jacquie Jacob, UK Poultry Extension Associate

Raising small poultry flocks on the farm or in the backyard has become very popular. The most important things to remember when choosing the type of housing are provisions for adequate shelter from weather, adequate ventilation and also protection from predators.

You should choose housing that is easy to build from readily available materials. Housing should also have a low maintenance cost and support the changing needs of your flock.

Over the years, a variety of designs for backyard flocks have hit the market, each with their own pros and cons. The best design for you depends on the number and types of birds you have and on how much you want to spend. It's a good idea to make the coop tall enough for you to stand inside; you'll clean it more often if you can get inside. If you need a lower coop for some reason, make sure you have easy access to make cleaning easier.

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One popular option for backyard flocks is a bottomless, moveable coop. The owner can move it at regular intervals, so the birds always have access to fresh grass. These housing units also protect birds from predators.

This type of structure is also helpful for small production flocks. You can use the basic hoop design and amend it for the size of your flock. You can even make an easy and relatively inexpensive portable housing system with cattle panels.

The University of Kentucky College of Agriculture, Food and Environment compiled a series of videos from Kentucky State University showing step-by-step instructions for poultry housing construction on its website at <http://www2.ca.uky.edu/smallflocks/Housing.html>. The site also provides links to other housing plans.

Strawberry Lemonade Muffins

Ingredients



1 1/4 cup of all purpose flour	1 Tbsp lemon zest
1 1/4 cup whole wheat flour	1/4 cup fresh lemon juice
1 cup sugar	2 Tbsp apple cider vinegar
1 (8oz) container of plain Greek Yogurt	2 tsp baking soda
6 Tbsp vegetable oil	1 1/2 cup chopped fresh strawberries

Servings: 12 muffins

Directions

Preheat oven to 400 degrees. Combine both flours and 1 cup sugar in a large bowl; make a well in center of mixture.

In a separate small bowl, combine the apple cider and baking soda, until mixture starts to foam/fizz. Stir apple cider/baking soda mixture with Greek yogurt and next four ingredients; add to flour mixture, stirring just until dry ingredients are moistened. Gently fold strawberries into batter. Spoon batter into lightly greased 12-cup muffin pans filling 3/4 full.

Bake at 400 degrees for 16 to 18 minutes or until golden brown and a wooden pick inserted in center comes out clean. Cool in pans on wire rack one minute; remove from pans to wire rack, and cool 10 minutes.

Credit: Plate it Up! Kentucky Proud

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COOPERATIVE
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