

Post Rock Extension District Column

Week of May 31 – June 4, 2021

By Sandra L. Wick

K-State Research and Extension-Post Rock District
Crop Production Agent

Don't forget about controlling flies for your cowherd!

Mother nature has really been giving us some significant moisture around northcentral Kansas. Stay tuned and I will give you some guidelines to use when putting together a fly control management plan for this summer.

We have been fortunate to have received moisture this spring, however, it can also provide favorable breeding conditions for flies. As we progress into the summer it is evident that fly pressure could be of a concern.

Flies do pose risk of irritation and lost dollars to beef producers and research has tagged over \$800 million dollars of lost revenue annually due to flies. These losses are mostly in reduced performance, lower ADG, Pinkeye, and lower milk production.

It is important to know that there are two main flies that bother cattle: The Face and the Horn Fly. The face fly is obviously found on the face around the eyes, mouth, and muzzle and reproduce in manure. These flies mostly feed on secretions from the eye and the main concern is that they are the main vector for Pinkeye. Therefore, one of the keys to pink eye prevention is fly control.

The horn fly is found mainly on the shoulders, back, and belly of the animal. These flies are the main culprit of lost performance as they utilize the host animal for 20-30 blood meals per day. Any more than 200 flies per animal will result in lost performance. These flies lay eggs in the manure, so fly control through feed additives is an effective prevention method.

There are several control methods for fly management including Fly tags, pour-ons, dust bags, oilers, knockdown sprays, feed additives, and baits.

Fly tags are a popular choice, however it is important that you diligently rotate active ingredients or types of insecticide to ensure resistance is not easily built up to a certain fly tag. It is also important to remove all old tags immediately after the season. Most fly tags provide good coverage for only 30-60 days. So, fly tags should be one part of your fly control plan... not the entire plan.

Sprays are effective in immediately decreasing fly loads on animals. They however do not provide much residual control and must be re-applied frequently. Lastly, feed additives like IGR can be fed through mineral or tubs. This prevention method is great at breaking the life-cycle of the fly.

Fly control is important to help ensure performance is not hampered and that your herd stays healthy and disease free. It is also important to keep good records of previous years to maintain effective control within your herd.

If you have questions on fly management and control, give me a call at any of our Post Rock Extension District Offices in Beloit, Lincoln, Mankato, Osborne or Smith Center.

Post Rock Extension District of K-State Research and Extension serves Jewell, Lincoln, Mitchell, Osborne, and Smith counties. Sandra may be contacted at swick@ksu.edu or by calling Smith Center, 282-6823, Beloit 738-3597, Lincoln 524-4432, Mankato 378-3174, or Osborne 346-2521. Join us on Facebook at "Post Rock Extension" along with our blog site at postrockextension.blogspot.com. Also remember our website is www.postrock.ksu.edu and my twitter account is @PRDcrops.