The Quarterly Beef News

Summer Edition Newsletter

McDowell County Center **August 2023**

Newsletter Highlights

Contact Us!

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

McDowell Center
County Administration Building, Room 226
60 East Court Street
Marion, NC 28752

Phone: 828-652-8104

http://mcdowell.ces.ncsu.edu

skyler_murray@ncsu.edu

August Cattlemen's Meeting

I hope everyone is looking forward to the next cattlemen's meeting. It will be held, **August 17th at 6 PM at the Senior Center**. Our speaker at this meeting will be the Jornigens from the Foothills Mobile Veterinary Services. They are going to talk and show pictures of their facility.

Have you watched your cows swatting their tales and throwing their heads at those annoying pesky flies? If so, you are not the only one. Those flies seem to love aggravating both us and the cattle. In this newsletter you will find some articles on ways to help mitigate fly problems in cattle. I have also included an article in this newsletter that talks about rotational grazing. Rotational grazing can be benefical for both you and the cow; with it, you can make your grazing season last longer, which means saving some money on feed & hay.

Please **RSVP** for the cattlemen's meeting by **August 15th**, you can call the office at (828) 652-8104.

Having Fly Problems?

It is that time of year when the summer heat is bringing the flies out and boy are they enjoying bothering our cattle. Have you tried spraying your cattle for flies and they just keep coming back? What about using pour-on insecticide? Well if you have used those in the past and it seems to not be touching your cattle this time let me help give you some tips and tricks to help your fly problem.

Are you using fly tags? If so good! If not, then why not? I understand the cost of the tags are not cheap, but it is cheaper than treating pinkeye. Pinkeye is spread from cow to cow with an infected fly that gathers at its eyes. Pinkeye can lead to blindness and in some cases the total loss of the eye. Their are some vaccines on the market to help prevent pinkeye. Unfortunately, it is like the flu their are different variants of it that goes around. That's why it is a good idea to use fly tags on cattle. They work great when paired with a pour-on insecticide, just make sure to rotate the types of flags and insecticides that you use every year.

If you find yourself using the same pour-on and fly spray and you are not seeing the results you would like to see, the chances are very high that the flies have built-up immunity to it over the generations. So, if you do use fly tags it is important to rotate what types you use every year, this will help to lower the flies chance of building immunity. It is just like rotating your cattle dewormers so the worms do not build-up immunity to it.

Fly Control Considerations for Cattle on Pasture

Adele Harty & Patrick Wagner

Along with being irritants to livestock, horn flies, face flies and stable flies are economically important to producers due to their negative impacts on milk production and calf weaning weights. In addition, they can affect grazing distribution and transmit eye diseases, such as pinkeye and infectious bovine rhinotracheitis (IBR). It is difficult to predict what fly levels will be like for any given year, but hot, dry weather can speed up development and usually results in high numbers. It is important to identify and understand life cycles of external pests affecting livestock in order to choose the most-effective control options.

Horn Flies

Horn flies are one of the most common and economically important ectoparasites of pastured cattle. Economic losses are estimated at more than $1 billion annually in the United States. This loss is a result of skin irritation, blood loss, decreased grazing efficiency, reduced weight gains and decreased milk production. Research in Nebraska found that calf weaning weights were 10–20 pounds (lbs.) heavier when flies were controlled on the cows.

Horn flies are about 1/2 to 1/3 the size of the common house fly, or approximately 3/16 of an inch long. They are commonly found on the backs, sides and polls of cattle. During the heat of the day, horn flies will migrate to the belly. As adults, they spend most of their time on cattle, piercing the skin of host animals to suck blood. Both male and female horn flies may take between 30 and 40 blood meals per day. After mating, the adult females deposit eggs in fresh manure and the eggs typically hatch within one week. The total life cycle of the horn fly is between 10 and 20 days, depending on weather conditions.

MANAGEMENT

The economic injury level (EIL) for horn flies is 200 flies per animal. At this point, the economic impact of the pest equals treatment costs, and a treatment plan should be started. Multiple insecticide options are available to manage horn flies, including dust bags, backrubbers (oilers), feed additives, sprays, pour-ons and insecticidal ear tags.

Dust bags or oilers may be either forced-use (placed in an area that animals must pass through) or free choice. However, if they are not in a forced use area, expect 35–50% less control. In a forced used setting, they offer good control, but require time checking and repairing bags.

Feed additives, such as oral larvicides and insect growth regulators (IGRs), pass through the animal's digestive system and prevent horn fly larvae from developing in the manure. While these additives are effective in reducing the number of larvae, this does not necessarily correlate to a reduction in the

number of adults, since flies will migrate to and from neighboring herds. Also, it is difficult to control intake of these feed additives, and some animals may not eat enough of the feed additive for the insecticide to be effective.

Sprays and pour-ons require applications every two-to-three weeks, which may not be feasible for some producers' summer grazing situations. Another option is the VetGun, which is a device similar to a paint ball gun that can be used to apply an individual capsule of insecticide to an animal. This method can provide horn fly control for 21–35 days, but it has limitations for large herds and retreatments.

Insecticidal ear tags contain an insecticide that moves from the surface of the tag to the coat of the animal. They are easy to apply and can be effective; however, there is a history of horn fly resistance to the active ingredients used in some tags. Products vary, but some general guidelines are listed below.

- Tag animals as late as possible to ensure maximum effectiveness when horn flies are present. Do not tag earlier than June 1.
- Tag mature cows and weaned calves. There is no need to tag nursing calves, as horn flies typically do not bother them.
- Remove used tags at the end of the season. This will help reduce the incidence of resistance.
- Use high-quality tags. Inexpensive tags are generally not as effective.

It is recommended to rotate to tags with a different active ingredient to impede resistance development. Do not apply insecticides from the same Mode of Action (MOA) groups repeatedly. Instead, rotate between MOA groups each year or even during the fly season. Mode of action groups include organophosphates (Group 1B), pyrethroids and pyrethrins (Group 3), avermectins and milbemycins (Group 6), juvenile hormone analogues (Group 7A) and benzoylureas – chitin inhibitors (Group 15).

Face Flies

Face flies resemble house flies, but they are slightly larger and darker. They are non-biting flies that cluster around animals' eyes, mouth and muzzle to feed on secretions. Females lay eggs in fresh manure, with the complete life cycle taking around 21 days. They are usually most numerous in late July and August in pastures that have a lot of shaded areas and waterways, areas with abundant rainfall and irrigated pastures. Face flies can cause irritation to eye tissues, which can predispose animals to disease transmission. Pinkeye is one such disease, and management of face fly populations is essential in preventing outbreaks. If pinkeye is a recurring problem, it is a good idea for producers to visit with their veterinarian about vaccine options.

MANAGEMENT

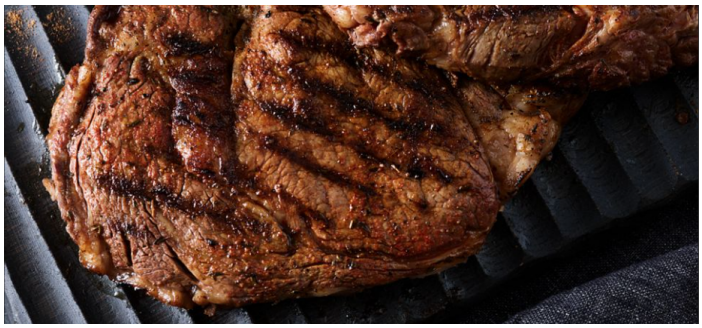
Managing face flies can be difficult because of their feeding locations on animals and the fact that they do not spend the majority of their time on animals. Effective control may require more than one method of treatment, including the use of insecticidal ear tags, dust bags and sprays. In contrast to horn flies, both cows and calves must be treated in order to reduce face fly populations.

Stable Flies

Stable flies are the size of a house fly, but darker in color. These are blood-feeding flies that mainly feed on the front legs. The most-common sites for development of stable flies are feedlots or dairies, as larvae develop in decaying organic matter, such as wet hay. However, they can also be found on pastures, particularly around winter hay feeding sites. Cattle often react to stable flies by bunching, stomping their legs or standing in water. This can disrupt grazing patterns, and Nebraska studies indicate reductions in weight gains from 0.2–0.4 pounds per day for grazing steers.

MANAGEMENT

It can be difficult to get adequate control with insecticides, since stable flies mainly congregate around animals' legs. Sprays are usually the best option for stable fly control and require weekly applications to manage populations. Mist blower sprayers can be used for this purpose; however, initial costs may be high. One of the best ways to eliminate stable flies is to remove sources of organic matter that create breeding grounds. Cleaning areas where cattle were fed during the winter and drying down manure by spreading it or dragging fields will help reduce fly populations.



Grilled Cowboy Steaks

INGREDIENTS:

- 2 beef Ribeye Steaks (about 1 pound)

- Rub:
- 2 teaspoons sweet paprika
- 1-1/2 teaspoons dried thyme leaves
- 1 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 teaspoon onion powder
- 1/2 teaspoon salt (optional)
- 1/2 teaspoon pepper

COOKING:

1. Combine Rub ingredients; press evenly onto beef Ribeye Steaks.
2. Cook's Tip: Beef Top Sirloin, Top Loin (Strip) or Tenderloin Steaks, cut 1 inch thick; or 2 pounds beef Porterhouse or T-bone steaks, cut 1 inch thick may be used.
3. Place steak(s) on grid over medium, ash-covered coals or over medium heat on preheated gas grill. Grill according to the chart for medium rare (145°F) to medium (160°F) doneness, turning occasionally.

Rotational vs. Continuous Grazing

University of Kentucky

In Kentucky, having cattle that graze is how many farmers provide additional income for their families. Continuous grazing has been the traditional way to graze cattle over generations, but there may be a way to improve your grazing system and make your operation more profitable. An alternative to continuous grazing is a method called rotational grazing . Each farm is different, and a grazing system that works for your neighbor may not work for you.

Continuous grazing is when cattle graze a pasture for an extended amount of time with no, or infrequent rest to the plants from grazing. Advantages of this method are low fencing cost, low daily management requirements, and when stocking rate is correct, acceptable animal gains. This method is most effective where forage availability is plentiful and the manager does not wish to increase livestock numbers. Continuous grazing is more successful when implemented with dry cows, bred heifers, and beef cows of moderate to low milking ability. When implemented with lactating dairy cattle, stocker calves, or other animals that require better quality forages, they may not perform to their potential.

One disadvantage of continuous grazing is the difficulty in controlling the timing and intensity of grazing. Another limitation of this system is during slow forage growth periods animal numbers need to be adjusted, or more acreage available for grazing. Continually grazing a pasture with too many animals will lead to reduced forage availability and quality and animal growth.

A continually grazed pasture will take longer to recover after a drought than a pasture that has been rested because the plants are more stressed. Another disadvantage to continuous grazing is the limited number of forages that can withstand the grazing pressure. Kentucky bluegrass and tall fescue are the two most popular grasses that can tolerate this grazing method and white clover is the only legume in Kentucky that has good stand survival under continuous grazing. Orchardgrass, red clover, and alfalfa are popular forages in KY, but stands of these species thin quickly under continuous grazing.

Rotational grazing is a system where a large pasture is divided into smaller paddocks allowing livestock to be moved from one paddock to the other easily. Using this method cattle are concentrated on a smaller area of the pasture for a few days then moved to another section of pasture. This movement allows the grazed paddock a rest period that permits forages to initiate regrowth, renew carbohydrate stores, and improve yield and persistency. When utilized properly, rotational grazing can help farmers increase forage productivity. Rotational grazing can help improve productivity, weight gain or milk production per acre, and overall net return to the farm. Rotational grazing allows for better manure distribution that acts as a source of nutrients to the soil.

Rotational grazing also has the potential to reduce machinery cost, fuel, supplemental feeding and the amount of forage wasted.

The disadvantages of rotational grazing include the need for more fence to be constructed, time required to move cattle, and the need to have water and access to shade from each smaller paddock. The use of temporary fence is an inexpensive way to divide fields into the smaller paddocks and can be moved based upon the producers' preference. If additional watering sources are needed they can be added by using plastic pipe placed on top of the ground from a current water source to the desired location.

Rotational grazing can help extend the grazing season, allowing a producer to rely less on stored feed and supplement. One of the most desirable attributes of this system is that a producer can design it to fit their needs. Rotational grazing allows a producer to be more in control of the timing and intensity of forage grazed by cattle. For those wanting to start using this system try taking one pasture and dividing it in half to begin with. If you see an improvement, divide it again the next year, or try dividing another pasture in half. For those who use this method it may take several years to figure out exactly what works best . Using temporary fence materials and portable watering tanks allows a producer to experiment with different paddock sizes and watering systems.

The type of grazing system that is best suited for a given farm will depend on the goal of the producer and their resources. Rotational grazing allows a producer a better opportunity to use livestock to manage grasses, legumes, and weeds. Continuous grazing requires less input and labor.

Increased area per animal is required as the season advances into the hot summer months, when pasture regrowth slows down. This can be done either by moving cattle to another paddock, often hay fields are cycled into grazing rotation after first cutting, or reducing herd numbers in a continually grazed system. The key to making a grazing system work is managing the balance between production and use of forage throughout the year.

Cow Herd Management Calendar

August/September/October:

- Make sure bull is in good breeding condition. Trim hooves, conduct breeding soundness exams.
- Make sure cattle have access to minerals, and order more as needed.
- Monitor for flies, start watching for pinkeye.
- Make sure the cattle maintain a body condition score of 5 to 6, provide additional feed if necessary.
- Start pulling soil samples on pastures, and figuring up how much fertilizer to apply this fall.

McDowell County Center
60 E. Court Street
Marion, North Carolina
28752

Compiled and edited by:

Skyler Murray
Extension Agent
Ag & Natural Resources

Secterial support by: Heather Peek

Upcoming Events:

- **Cattlemen's Meeting**- *August 17*
- **Biltmore Angus Field Day & Fall Sale, Asheville, NC**- September *30*
- **Fred Smith Company Ranch Extra Effort Fall Sale, Clayton, NC**- *October 14*
- **Locust Level Farms Sake, Vernon Hill, Va**- *November 4*
- **48th Annual Union County Performance Tested Bull Sale, Monroe, NC-** *December 2*