

Over the past couple of weeks we have had producers ask us how to best control flies with all the rain we have been having. Because the cattle have so many flies, producers may be concerned that the productivity of their cattle may be compromised, or in jeopardy, and are seeking a solution. This week we will talk about fly control this time of year, and how monitoring your cattle and pastures can help you determine when a fly prevention should be implemented.

Although flies are prevalent right now, prevention is not necessary as long as forage quality remains high. Flies affect the productivity of cattle the most by disturbing the cattle as they graze. If the cattle are too busy swatting the flies instead of eating, they may not meet their nutritional requirements. When forage quality is high, cattle don't have to consume as much to meet their requirements. Therefore, fly control is not as important if the forage quality is high and the cattle are doing well. When forage quality decreases, something should be done before the flies begin to negatively affect the cattle. There are a number of products on the market that aide in controlling flies, such as back rubbers, pour-ons, fly tags, and IGR. Each product has its own strengths and weaknesses, so it is best to use the product that works best in your herd.

Whichever product you choose, make sure that it is doing its job. Without proper fly control in times of decreased quality of nutrition, the productivity of cattle will suffer. The cattle will have a more difficult time gaining weight, which results in lower weaning weights in the calves. Weight loss in a lactating cow may cause further problems for the producer, as maintaining her desired body condition score will be more difficult and costly while she loses weight. This can lead the producer farther from the ultimate goal of "increasing pounds of calf produced per cow exposed, and minimizing cow cost per year", both of which are important when maximizing profitability of the cattle operation. In the coming months we encourage you to closely monitor your pastures and cattle, and take special care so flies do not create problems with the productivity of your operation. If you have any questions about controlling flies, please let us know.

Prices for feeder steers medium and large 1 sold through the Oklahoma National Stockyards on Monday, May 18, 2015, are as follows: 472lb- \$299.78, 559lb- \$277.01, 656lb- \$246.16, 776lb- \$218.33. The price for August 2015 750lb feeder steers on the Chicago Mercantile Exchange was \$216.5 on closing Monday, May 18, 2015.

Please note that this will be the last article for the next couple of months. In the meantime, please don't hesitate to contact us if you have any questions.

Thanks,
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