RUMENCO

GARLIC BULLETIN

Help keep grazing disturbance to a minimum and performance on target with SUPAlyx Garlic

The summer months can often be the time when grazing livestock around the farm get the least attention, except from the local fly population!

Cattle and sheep at grass will certainly be attracting the interest of the local fly population this summer given the mild and wet winter.

Due to the mild weather conditions this winter, over-wintering fly populations are unlikely to have been killed off. As the weather warms up the nation's cattle probably won't be short of close attention from insects seeking a convenient meal.

Flies and midges that affect livestock are not only a nuisance and irritation to the animal, they can also transmit diseases. And with the re-emergence of midge-borne diseases such as Schmallenberg in certain areas, we have become only too aware of the potential threat from these air borne vectors.

There are two main groups of flies which cause problems for livestock producers: flies which bite and feed on blood and flies that feed on the secretions from the eyes, nose, udder and the sweat on the animal's coat and skin.

Within the two groups there are a number of different types of flies, some of which transmit disease, and others which are just a plain nuisance, but still distract the animal from grazing.

Control of all flies is important, but tackling those that transmit disease should be the top priority. The face fly is one of the most prolific and prevalent species. Known to transmit New Forest Eye disease, the face fly is active from late spring until early autumn and has several breeding cycles each summer. Similar in appearance to the house fly, it lays its eggs in fresh dung and adult flies emerge just seven to 20 days later.

The face fly tends to be more prevalent in the south and feeds on eye and udder secretions, as well as sweat from the body. It does not have a powerful bite, but

does have minute teeth, which cause lesions in the eye. It also carries Moraxella bovis, the organism that causes New Forest Eye.

The head fly is also a nasty piece of work. Identified as the culprit that transmits summer mastitis, the head fly only has one breeding cycle per year and adult flies can emerge in large swarms. They are widespread in the UK, particularly in the north of the country, and cause intense irritation to the animal when feeding en masse.

The head fly lays its eggs in soil, manure and a variety of decaying vegetable matter and because they only have one breeding cycle, controlling them early in the season will reap dividends later in the summer months.

Other fly species, whilst not necessarily transmitting serious diseases, still create significant problems.

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Stable flies, for example, deliver a nasty bite and have three or more breeding cycles a year causing them to be active well into December if the weather stays mild.

They particularly like buildings and can be a real problem in the milking parlour if they find their way in on the cows.

Control of all these flies during the season, and other relevant species such as sweat flies, horse flies, black flies and midges, is vital. Eradication is impossible, but

effective control should be the aim of every farmer and will not only help herd health this season, it will also reduce potential fly populations for next year.

Understanding how your own farm appeals to flies is an important step forward in better fly control. In fact, knowing where and when flies are breeding and then taking action to restrict the potential farm fly population is just as important as controlling flies on the animals. Flies breed in dung and vegetable matter, and near water, so it is important to ensure their proliferation opportunities are as limited as possible by eliminating breeding hotspots around the farm, keeping livestock well away from water and ensure a good level of hygiene.

Offer free-access garlic buckets help discourage these nuisance insects

Special nutrition supplements can help discourage flies from livestock. A number of studies have shown that the oil fraction of garlic can be effective against a wide range of insects. Costa-Júnior and Furlong (2011) showed that cattle treated with 20g/day of garlic extract suffered a significantly lower level of tick larvae infestation than a control group.

When used in feed supplements, after ingestion garlic odour begins to secrete from the animal. After a few days, cattle offered this supplement will start to emit the strong garlic compounds through their skin. This strong smell can confuse flies and discourage them from seeking out their next blood meal!

Rumenco's SUPAlyx Garlic has been formulated as a summer grazing high specification mineral-vitamin supplement. With the inclusion of garlic it acts as a natural means of helping to discourage flies and biting insects, which may otherwise cause stress, grazing disturbance and irritation to stock, resulting in potential reduced performance and health. It is fortified with minerals, trace elements and vitamins, including protected zinc, to support good stock health and complement forages

Make sure your stock get all the protection they can get from flies this summer and keep performance on target

**(Costa-Júnior, L. M. and Furlong, J. 2011. Efficiency of sulphur in garlic extract and non-sulphur homeopathy in the control of the cattle tick rhipicephalus (boophilus) microplus. Medical and Veterinary Entomology, 25 (1), pp. 7-11.)

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