



MARCH 2025 DAIRY NEWSLETTER

Spring Cleaning

Flies

The largest economic return for fly control is effective cleanliness and sanitation. Approximately 90% of a dairy's flies will develop in less than 10% of its physical area. Flies reproduce in undisturbed, damp organic matter. Here are some ideas you can do now to reduce the fly population before they're well established.

- Removing and disposing of wasted feed, spilled milk or manure will go a long way in reducing fly populations.
- Eliminating tall weeds around facilities can reduce attractiveness to flies, especially stable flies.
- In some cases, alternative bedding sources (such as sand in calf hutches) can be considered during the summer months.
- Make sure you have pour-on on hand before you actually need it, as sometimes it goes on back order early in fly season.
- If you use fly tape, make sure you put it up before the fly population gets out of control.

Thinking outside the box:

- Parasitic wasps
 - Imported parasitic wasps target species like house and stable flies that do not breed on animals, but breed in manure, rotting vegetation, pen bedding and other places where they subsequently irritate livestock and can limit animal growth. They do not sting and are very tiny. The wasps lay eggs in the fly pupa. The eggs hatch and eat the fly larva, and the wasps complete their life cycle.
 - The key to using this approach is to start releasing them at the beginning of fly season. You have to periodically release them every two weeks or so to keep the fly populations under control.

Manure

How we manage manure is not just important for fly control, but where we spread it should also be considered. We recommend not spreading manure on a hay field that will be harvested and fed to youngstock the same season (as well as pasture that youngstock will be put out onto). This is to reduce exposure to Johnes and parasites, so avoid this if at all possible. (You might have noticed that this is a question in the Biosecurity Ramp form you are required to fill out for proAction).

Fans!

Now would be a great time to remember which fan or fans might not have been working last fall, or maybe there was one you meant to repair or replace but you never got around to it! Check belts for cracks. Also check for bird nests. It's best to look at them now, before it gets warm (and before spring fieldwork starts).

Sprinkler Systems

Along the same lines as fans, make sure everything is still properly hooked up and try to remember if a section might not have been working last fall. Now would also be a good time to get them installed if you were thinking of adding this to your heat abatement plan.

Shade

Calves

- Whether in a hut or on pasture, shade can be hugely beneficial to youngstock as heat stress affects growth rates and disease.

Cows

- If they get turned out onto pasture, make sure there is shade readily available.
- If your barn is not oriented in a way to reduce sun shining in onto the stalls, consider putting up a shade cloth. Ventilation must be considered if you decide to add this to your barn.

Drugs

In the spirit of "spring cleaning", go through your drug cupboard and look at expiries and supplies. We have seen an uptick in pneumonia in youngstock recently, so make sure you have something on hand to treat that so you're not scrambling.



Attention: We can no longer accept blood in syringes for analysis. This is because if the blood clots outside of a blood tube, it can damage the blood analyzer and give false results. Please ask your herd veterinarian for some serum separator tubes to have on hand in the event you need to collect blood from a down cow.