

## Livestock Insects-Cattle

# Face Fly Identification and Field Biology

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### Introduction

The face fly resembles the house fly in size and appearance but is considerably different in behavior and life cycle. Like horn flies, face flies deposit eggs in cattle manure. The life cycle takes about three weeks to complete. Face flies overwinter as adults in sheltered areas such as attics and siding in houses, barns and sheds. On warm winter days, they may become active and become a pest in the living quarters of an infested house.

The face fly has been a problem in the Northern Plains states but now are restricted primarily to areas along the Missouri River and east. In more arid areas, the manure may dry out too fast for the fly to complete its life cycle.

### Animal Response and Damage

The face fly is a persistent feeder around the eyes and nose, where it feeds on mucous and tears. The mouthparts consist of mandibles with serrated edges, and its feeding action is a rasping type. The feeding injures the tissue around the eyes, which causes tearing and provides an avenue for the entrance of eye pathogens such as *Maraxella bovis*, one of the causative agents of pinkeye.

### Management Approaches

#### Biological

Considerable research with a nematode that destroys female ovaries and a pupal parasite that killed the pupae was conducted in Nebraska, but neither proved effective enough to be employed for control.

#### Chemical

The insecticides recommended for control of horn flies will also control face flies. The dusts, sprays, oiler mixes, some feed additives, boluses and ear tags registered for control of horn flies also are registered for face fly control. The exception is methoprene feed additive and bolus. The pyrethroid insecticide ear tags are registered for face fly control, but should be rotated annually with other insecticides because of horn fly resistance. Insecticides listed in the table for horn fly control, other than those mentioned above, will control face flies.

Categories: Livestock Insects, Cattle, Face fly

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