



The  
**GEORGE**  
Farm Vets

# Fly Control

## April 25



### Fly Control Overview

As the days grow longer, drier and warmer, turnout is fast approaching. While it may feel early, it's crucial to prepare in advance to ensure the grazing season is maximized.

There are 20 common species of flies that feed on cattle, which can be categorized as either biting or non-biting/nuisance flies. The direct impacts of fly infestations, observable in the field or in sheds, include restlessness, stamping, and tail swishing. However, the indirect effects of flies are far more significant when considering milk yields and growth rates. Studies have shown that fly-related stress can result in losses of up to 0.3 kg of weight and 0.5 litres of milk per day.

### Common Fly Species

- **Stable Flies:** These are painful, biting flies known for their persistence. In 2012, the US industry estimated the economic impact of stable flies at \$2.21 billion annually. It only takes 20 stable flies on an animal to reach the economic threshold of concern
- **Face Flies:** Known to transmit Infectious Bovine Keratoconjunctivitis (New Forest Eye)
- **Head Flies:** Non-biting, nuisance flies that cause severe irritation. They feed on secretions, such as those at the teats, often leading to self-inflicted trauma. **These flies can also contribute to the development of summer mastitis, which more often** than not results in a blind quarter

### Control Measures

Given the milder climate the fly season is extending, making it essential to be vigilant and plan ahead. Consider the duration of effectiveness of the control products you use. An integrated approach targeting both the adult fly population and the larvae/maggot stages will be most effective in maintaining the well-being of your cattle.

- **Parasitic Wasps (Friendly Flies)**
  - These wasps target and kill flies before they mature and lay eggs
  - They do not cause irritation to the cattle themselves
  - Our veterinary tech team visit the farm twice a month to distribute bags of the wasps, from March to November. The distribution is targeted to high-risk areas, such as calf sheds, water troughs and muck heaps
  - Please get in touch if you would like further information

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- **Fly Tags**

- A long-term solution for fly control, but they must be applied before the fly burden becomes too heavy
- Suitable for cattle of all ages, these typically contain a synthetic pyrethroid-based product, such as cypermethrin. The length of protection depends on the specific compound and concentration in the tag

- **Pour-On Treatments**

- Regular reapplication throughout the season is necessary, so this option requires careful consideration based on your management system
- Be sure to apply only when weather conditions are dry, as rain will reduce efficacy

- **Environmental Management**

- Effective fly control begins with managing manure. Flies thrive in wet, muddy areas such as muck or slurry heaps. While adult flies contribute to only 15% of the issue, focusing efforts on controlling breeding grounds will dramatically improve overall fly control

By implementing these strategies you can protect your cattle from the negative effects of fly infestations and help optimize both milk production and growth rates.



## Vet Tech Update

It's that time of year again - if you would like a friendly fly visit from one of our vet techs please contact the office.



Best wishes,

Hannah Alexander

## Medicine Handling Course

(suitable for Beef and Sheep clients)

on

Thursday 10<sup>th</sup> April @ the practice

between 11-12pm - £75 + Vat



Contact the practice on 01666 823035, Option 1

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