

## THIS MONTH'S TOPIC - FRIENDLY FLY CONTROL!

### MEETINGS COMING UP

#### **Preparing cattle for turnout:**

**10.2.22 - 7pm on Zoom.**

*Interested in different ways to get the best from your cattle whilst being aware of the environmental impacts? Also discussing the importance of lungworm and flies.*

#### **Hipra meeting:**

**17.2.22 - 7pm @ The Royal Oak, Prestbury, GL52 3DL.**

*What's new in the sheep world? Discussing abortion, mastitis and the use of Spectam.*

#### **Medicine course**

**24.2.22—12pm-2pm on Zoom.**

#### **Lambing course:**

**24.2.22—10am to 5pm—Venue TBA**

*Covering all aspects of lambing and aftercare.*

*Food and drink provided.*

*Contact the office on 01666 823035 or  
E: [farm@georgevetgroup.co.uk](mailto:farm@georgevetgroup.co.uk)*

Whilst we are now seeing the hardest frosts we have had all winter, you may be wondering why I'm about to bombard you with the annual fly prevention newsletter. However, as the old saying goes "New Year, new method of fly control." So, please bear with and read on.

#### **Nuisance and biting flies cause a number of issues, including:-**

- Spreading disease, increasing mastitis and ocular
- Irritation in the parlour, kicking off the cluster.
- Reduced feed intakes and in turn, yield.
- Constant irritation, leading to damage to farm infrastructure and wounds when itching (Flystrike!)



Reducing the fly population through the spring and summer (and our mild autumns!), can be a time-consuming headache and the consequences of Summer Mastitis (£250-300 per case, AHDB) and New Forest Eye (reduced DLW at weaning), are expensive and frustrating.

Our typical methods of control are synthetic pyrethroids and pyrethrins (Spot-On) and ivermectins (various - mec and - mectin pour-on/injectable products). Whilst these are effective products and will remain a necessary tool in our arsenal, it is important that we react to new information.

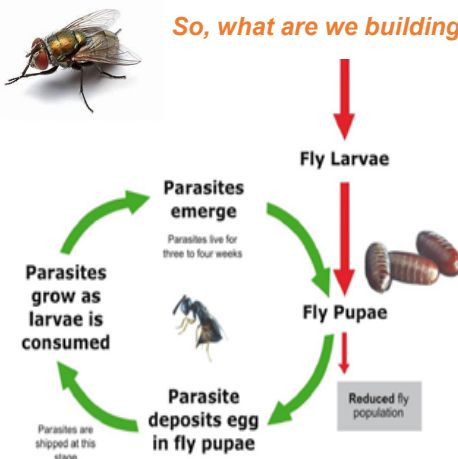
- There is evidence that resistance can develop in fly populations to some of these chemicals, meaning their effectiveness may be decreasing over time.
- These insecticides have a detrimental effect on soil health. As the name suggests, these chemicals indiscriminately target insects, removing the many species of dung beetles which are critical to soil fertility.
- Adult flies seen on farm only make up 15% of the population – the other 85% are in the larval stage, which will be unaffected by pour-on solutions until adulthood. By the time they land on the cattle to feed, they may have laid many more eggs so the population will keep increasing even as the adults are killed.

**So, what are we building up to?** DEFRA and English Nature have granted permission for the release of two species of native wasp (so called Friendly Flies). There are at least 6000 known species of parasitic wasp naturally found in the UK, including these two, so this isn't going to be like the cane toad in Australia!

#### **The lifecycle of these wasps is as follows:-**

1. The adult wasp lays eggs within the fly pupae (which is the stage of fly development between eggs and adults).
2. The wasp eggs hatch and consume the fly pupae as the wasps mature.
3. The wasps emerge as adults and repeat the above steps.

In this way, released wasps act as biological agents, reducing the fly population by killing them off before they are mature enough to lay eggs themselves. They provide a new, sustainable approach to fly control, which doesn't cause the four issues listed above, because the wasps are not interested in cattle.



## How the process works

Distribute Friendly Flies from March to November (they will over-winter for the following season).

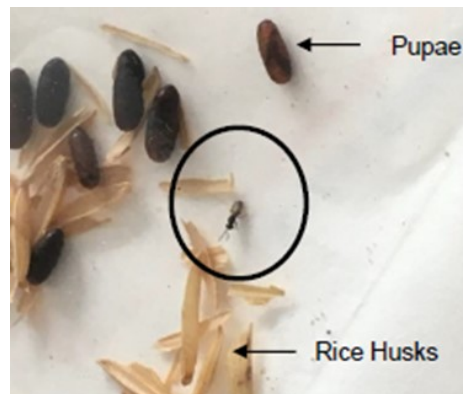
Bags with pre-parasitised nuisance fly eggs are distributed across the farm in 12-20 high risk locations (calf sheds, around water troughs and solid muck heaps that won't be moved are all ideal places).

This is repeated twice monthly, with the amount of eggs distributed in proportion to head of cattle (roughly 1 large bag per 100 cows). If there are any muck piles building up over summer, it may mean an additional bag is necessary to be effective.

The eggs must be repeatedly placed because the parasitic wasps require time to build-up their own population. Their maturation is roughly double that of the common nuisance and biting flies, so for every one wasp reaching adulthood, there are two adult flies. A lag is expected in the first season, which means the cattle may still need the insecticide cover.

A study conducted in Argentina found a 90% reduction in fly population when compared to untreated control farms!

Please get in touch if you would like further information and we would be pleased to put in place a plan for the season ahead!



## HUSKVAC



Now is also the time to be thinking about and contacting our dispensary regarding your Huskvac needs. The basic vaccination regime can be administered to **healthy animals over 8 weeks** of age. The regime is of **two doses given orally 4 weeks apart**. Immunity develops over the two weeks following the second dose, so it is important not to mix vaccinated stock with non-vaccinated stock or allow them to graze on pastures recently used by unvaccinated stock until after this period. Therefore, you need to be prepared to start vaccinating 6 weeks before your earliest turn out date!

**TEAM NEWS** : **WELCOME** to **Fien Coudenys** who joins the farm team. Fien graduated in Belgium and has been working in farm practice in Northern Ireland for the past year. She is looking forward to meeting you all over the coming months.



## LAY TB TESTER opportunity

GLoucestershire / WILTshire- Non-veterinary TB tester required

(Approved Tuberculin Tester) 4 days Mon, Tues, Thurs, Fri. Option to discuss full time may exist



### FULL TRAINING PROVIDED .

For more information please call Gethin Roberts on 07789 997014.

Applications with covering letter and CV to Gethin Roberts:

E: [Gethin.roberts@georgevetgroup.co.uk](mailto:Gethin.roberts@georgevetgroup.co.uk)

Closing date:  
28th FEB

E: [farm@georgevetgroup.co.uk](mailto:farm@georgevetgroup.co.uk)



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