

Get on top of flies, before they get on top of you

With warmer weather comes the dreaded flies. Flies tend to start breeding around the end of March/April time (NOW!).

Not only do flies transmit diseases such as summer Mastitis and New Forest Eye, they can negatively impact on milk production (up to 0.5L/day) and growth rates (up to 0.3kg/day) through worrying animals.

In addition, they can cause significant disruption during milking. Early intervention is key to control fly populations on farm as fly numbers exponentially grow throughout the summer; population explosions! Females can lay anywhere from 350 to 900 eggs in their lifetime and can produce up to 12 generations in one summer.

Adult flies are only 15% of the population with the remaining 85% at the larval stage so by the time you visibly see flies their population has already exploded. After hatching, a female fly can lay eggs as soon as two weeks later!

Control On farm control involves addressing flies both at source and at cow level.

The female fly will lay eggs in a warm, moist environment such as manure heaps, soiled straw, waste silage, brewers' grains and other rotting organic matter. Particular hot spots on farm include the edge of the bedded pens and in calf housing. Calf pens are often prolific breeding areas as they have an abundance of pen edges, animals to bite, manure and milk. Focusing efforts to improve hygiene in these areas will reduce the number of available breeding sites. Applying products such as fly parasites or insect growth regulators can help depress larval progression.

In terms of treatment at cow level, pour on products are readily available. Spotinor is a pour on product with a standard 10ml dose per cow. It affords protection for 4-8 weeks pending challenge on farm. The product carries zero milk and 17 day meat withhold.

Our Vet Tech service can administer Spotinor to your animals as part of a bespoke on-farm fly control programme this summer. For £1.44/head the Vet Tech's will visit your farm 3 times over the fly season to apply the product, saving you both time and money by only paying for what you need.

In order to qualify for the Vet Tech service cattle need to be presented through a handling system or locking feed barrier. Spotinor is also available to purchase separately at a very competitive price. Please speak to the practice for further information on our competitive fly control package.