The necessity for a fly control program for beef herds is inevitable and if you haven’t started a program in your herd, now is the time. The two major species of flies that cause the most serious decreases in beef production and require the most control efforts are the horn fly and face fly. The horn fly alone is estimated to cause animal losses to the US beef industry of $700 million. Tests have shown that the annoyance, irritation, and blood loss caused by flies can reduce weaning weights of calves nursing fly infested mother cows by 12 to 14 pounds; average daily gain of grazing yearling steers may be reduced 12 to 14 percent, or as much as 30 pounds, during the grazing season. Both face flies and horn flies annoy cattle, resulting in reduced grazing time and increased energy expenditure.

The adult horn fly, which is about one half the size of a house fly, has piercing/sucking mouth parts and feeds on blood and tissue fluids of cattle. They spend most of their adult life on cattle and feed 20 to 40 times a day. They are normally found on the animal’s back, but may migrate to the sides and the belly as the temperatures increase. They are weak fliers, but may be carried great distances by high winds. The females leave the animal only to lay eggs in fresh cow manure, where they hatch into larvae. The life cycle is completed in eight to forty-five days depending on temperature and humidity. The best methods of fly control are the integrated approach, using several different methods and insecticides for a longer lasting, more effective fly control program. For more information contact your Cooperative Ext. Center.

October 18 and October 19, 2005 (must attend both days) at the Duplin County Cooperative Extension Center from 10am to 5pm both days. There is a $25 registration fee for the class. Contact Star Jackson at 910.296.2143 for more information.

The 2005 Southeast Pork Conference will be held on November 17 from 4pm – 9pm (dinner included) at the Onslow County Multipurpose Complex. This meeting has been approved for four (4) hours of continuing education credits for Animal Waste Water Operators. Contact Diana Rashash at 910.455.5873 to pre-register for this event.

A Continuing Education Credit Class will be offered on November 29, 2005 at the Duplin County Cooperative Extension Center. Individual classes will be offered to allow producers flexibility in attending classes necessary to remain a certified operator. Contact Star Jackson to register for this event at 910.296.2143.
Mark your calendars!! The Southeast District REINS is tentatively planning a Fall Trail Ride on Sunday, October 23, 2005 at the Pine Cliffs area of the Croatan National Forest near Havelock. Several workdays have been planned for October to map and mark trails for this ride. Anyone interested in helping to sponsor the ride or to map trails should contact Emily Adams at 910.455.5873 or Emily_adams@ncsu.edu.

Snakes on Your Farm

Most people are bitten when trying to kill or handle a snake. As a general rule, snakes are just as frightened of you as you are of them. Given a chance, they will move away from you. Do not corner a snake!! Remember snakes feed of rodents and insects. Maintaining a rodent and insect control program on your farm will help with this situation. You can also reduce the likelihood of their presence near your production barns, grain bins, and offices by removing items they might use for shelter – or which their prey might use – such as scrap sheet metal, boards, woodpiles, and similar debris. Raising materials off the ground promotes dryer storage and attracts fewer insects and rodents. When woodlands and other plant communities are nearby, eliminating the possibility of a snake is virtually impossible. Learn to identify the dangerous species in Eastern North Carolina, and be cautious when conducting activities that could promote encounters (e.g. hitching up an implement that has been stored at the edge of a woodline, reaching into a bucket without looking into it first, and cleaning up old feeders, curtain material, sow crates, etc.

There are 37 snake species in North Carolina, of which 6 species are poisonous (Copperhead, Cottonmouth, Timber rattlesnake, Pigmy rattlesnake, Eastern diamondback rattlesnake, and Eastern coral snake). Take the time to learn the characteristics of a poisonous snake and the correct way to deal with snakebites. Your local Cooperative Extension Center has information about snakes and other types of wildlife.

Fire Ant Management and Control

Fire ant management is site specific, because of the different traffic patterns, types of livestock, and production practices. If you are looking to control fire ants around your farm, consider the following:

- Decide where you want to control fire ants. Make a map of areas most important to control (ex: areas where livestock or horses graze).
- Find you greatest concentration of fire ant mounds. Consider when to control fire ants since control is least effective in extreme temperatures (less than 60 degrees F or over 90 degrees F).
- Choose a product that is legal for use on the where you plan to apply it (pastures, hayfields, lawns, and vegetable gardens all require different restrictions). Read and follow all labels carefully!

Products labeled for use in pastures and hayfields include: Sevin, Amdro, Siege, Logic, Extinguish, Distance, and Varsity. Contact your local Cooperative Extension or contact your chemical representative for recommended rates.

Sincerely,

Star Jackson
Extension Agent
Agriculture