**Summer Fly Control**

With summer in full swing, flies may be having a field day on your operation. While horn flies, face flies, and their assorted comrades are a distracting nuisance, they can also threaten the overall health and productivity of your herd. Flies may bite teats, causing damaged sites where mastitis-causing pathogens colonize. Furthermore, the more time heifers and cows spend evading and repelling flies, the less time they spend eating or grazing.

For best results, combine chemical fly controls with cultural and environmental prevention measures. Is your housing environment conducive to fly development? Clean pens frequently to disrupt the fly breeding environment and pay special consideration to calf housing. Kill fly eggs and larvae by spreading manure in thin layers or completely covering manure piles with black plastic. Clean or remove feed areas, buckets, old tires, and poorly drained areas that provide a fly breeding habitat.

Fly predators are a biological control alternative. These small, wasp-like insects prey on unwanted flies and do not irritate cattle or humans. To be effective, they must be applied early in the season. If the property is too large to allow widespread distribution of predators or a neighboring facility in close proximity has uncontrolled flies, predators may be less effective.

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**Risks and Hazards of Manure Management**

Every month Farm Bureau releases the monthly accident report for Virginia. This report serves a reminder of how dangerous jobs in agriculture are. Now that we are finally starting to see signs of spring and summer, farmers are out doing what they do best to ensure feed for their cattle. Spreading manure and seeding fields for new crops will be top priority. In light of the recent accidental manure spills and the start of a new season, it seems timely to write about manure.

Manure poses deadly hazards every day to humans, cattle, and the environment. Emptying a manure pit or lagoon for field application may be a routine event on a dairy farm, but can also be a deadly chore. A quick online search with the key words “manure pit deaths” took 0.48
Upcoming Activities

See VTDairy for details.

Monthly Round Table—JUNE Discussion Group—Com Production, Franklin Co., contact cmartel@vt.edu

June 11, 2014 Dairy Day, Harrisonburg Turks Baseball Game

June 14, 2014 Franklin County DHIA annual award picnic with guest speaker Dr. Gonzalez Ferreira

July 30, 2014 VA Dairy Expo, Weyers Cave

July 31, 2014 VA State Colored Breed Show

July 31, 2014 District Dairy Show

August 1, 2014 VA Sale of Stars

August 2, 2014 VA Summer Show

September 22-24, 2014 Southeast Quality Milk Initiative 2nd Annual Meeting

For more information on Dairy Extension or to learn about current programs, visit us at VTDairy—Home of the Dairy Extension Program at: www.vtdairy.dasc.vt.edu

R.E. James,
Dairy Extension Coordinator & Extension Dairy Scientist, Dairy Nutrition

4. Work with local public safety, fire departments, EMS, and police to set up on-farm drills.

Manure is the farmer’s black gold! Farmers rely on the manure to fertilize the fields and crops to feed their cows. Manure not only affects and creates a deadly environment for farmers, but can create problems for cattle, as well as other animals and aquatic life. Poorly ventilated facilities pose health problems for cattle. Toxic gases from manure can lead to respiratory problems in cows, which can ultimately affect milk production and reproduction. Sick cows eat less which in turn reduces milk production and creates an unstable energy balance leading to reproductive problems.

Every year farmers are faced with the awful possibility of death from fumes and the potential environmental nightmare associated with accidental spills. Every farmer fears the day when he or she returns home to find a manure spill with manure coating the banks of a nearby stream. Manure that enters a water source can kill fish and aquatic life quickly, which presents a health hazard to humans and animals downstream that might rely on that water source. In the event of a manure related accident every farm should:

1. Have protocols posted for all types of manure related situations.
2. Have a phone nearby to call 911 or Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) report a spill.
3. Teach everyone on the farm how to react in the event of a manure related incident.

Have a Plan! Every farmer needs to have a plan in place BEFORE an accident. Contact your local Extension Office if you think your farm needs to develop protocols to manage manure related risks and hazards to help prevent a deadly event.

“Every farmer and employee should know the risks involved with the management and handling of manure.”

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