

Understanding the Economics of Horn Flies in Beef Cattle Production

Horn Flies are small, but they have a big impact

The Horn Fly (*haematobia irritans*) is a small biting fly, about half the size of a house fly, with gray coloring and 2 stripes on the thorax that is typically found congregating on the backs of cattle.

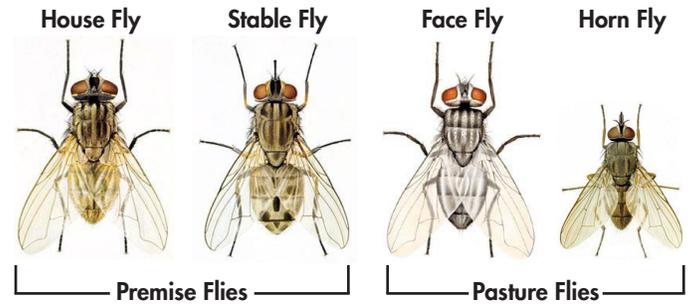
The female horn fly will only leave its host only to lay more eggs in its freshly deposited cow manure. Although she will only live for two and four weeks, during that time she will lay between 100 and 200 eggs! Full maturation of the eggs happens six to eight days later. Left untreated, a few adult horn flies can quickly explode to a population of 4,000 or more flies per animal.

Horn Flies use their piercing mouth parts to feed on the blood of cattle, taking up to 40 meals a day. They limit performance by creating stress and discomfort in cows. University research indicates horn fly populations can reduce milk yield and quality and that controlling horn flies on growing heifers can also prevent blind quarters and the spread of mastitis.

Cows use valuable energy to get away from flies

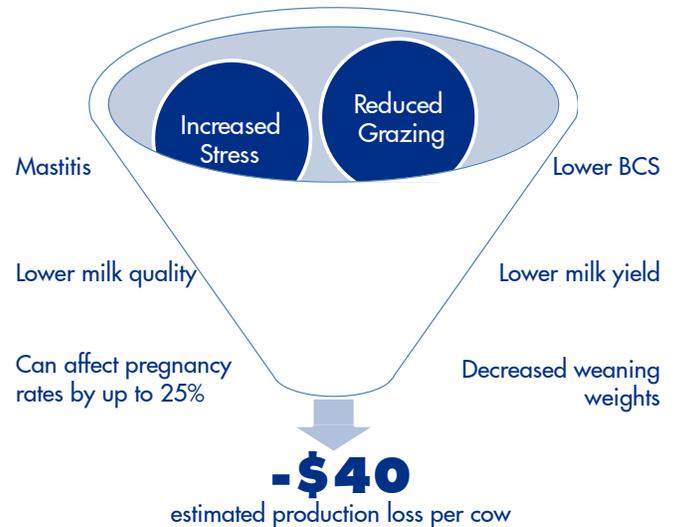
The cow's total energy balance is altered when exposed to horn fly infestations, thereby decreasing productivity.

Losses can be attributed to reduced weight gains, decreased feed efficiency and decreased milk yields caused by loss of blood and excessive energy expenditure to dislodge the flies. Horn fly infestations can also impact pregnancy rates, BCS and overall health of the animal (for example, reduced instances of pinkeye with fewer clusters of cows).



Small, but powerful, research shows horn flies cost the beef industry over \$1 billion per year making it North America's most pervasive and costly external cattle parasite.¹

1. <http://www.csrees.usda.gov/funding/nri/highlights/2002/no3.pdf>



15 Horn flies can cause **15** to 50 pounds of weight loss per head over the summer.
30 At \$2 per pound, an average of **30** pounds loss per head
6k in a 100 cow herd results in a **\$6k** loss.

Controlling Horn Flies with Altosid® IGR

An Insect Growth Regulator (IGR) controls horn flies by interrupting their life cycle, rather than through direct toxicity. Altosid® IGR passes through the digestive system and into the manure, where horn flies lay their eggs. At very small concentrations, it keeps the horn fly larvae from developing into adult flies that would otherwise emerge from the manure. There has not been a verified case of resistance since the technology was introduced in 1975.

While residual insecticides are toxic to beneficial insects, Altosid® IGR does not disrupt dung composition and does not harm beneficial insects such as dung beetles.



Using the 30 - 30 method for horn fly control in your herd

Left untreated, a few adult horn flies can quickly explode to a population of 4,000 flies or more per animal. Feeding Right Now® Emerald with Altosid® IGR using the 30/30 formula prevents flies from multiplying, successfully breaking their life cycle.

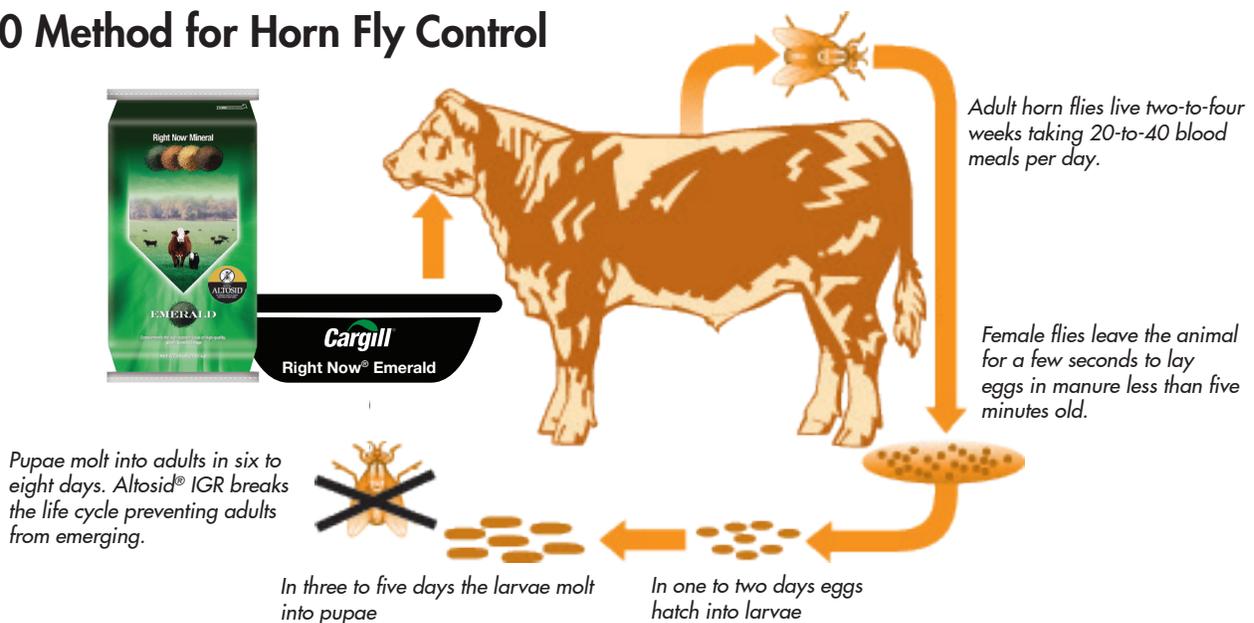
30 Days before emergence

- Begin feeding Right Now® Emerald with Altosid® IGR 30 days before overwintering flies emerge. Horn flies emerge in the spring when the average daily temperatures reach 18°C (65°F)
- Put out a five-to-seven-day supply of the mineral near watering holes or loafing areas, allowing one feeder for every 15-20 animals.
- Check mineral consumption and increase or decrease the number of feeders, or move them if necessary, to adjust for proper consumption.

30 Days after the first frost

- Continue feeding Right Now® Emerald with Altosid® IGR for 30 days after the first frost to help prevent horn flies from overwintering. Exposing horn fly larvae to Altosid® IGR can reduce the number of overwintering pupae.
- Horn flies overwinter in the pupal stage and jump start adult populations in the Spring.
- Continue for 30 days after the first frost as a temperature bounce-back could allow additional horn fly generations to develop.

30-30 Method for Horn Fly Control



"Always read and follow label directions. Altosid and the cow head design are registered trademarks of Wellmark International."

Save
\$1 per bag
until June 30, 2019

Altosid® IGR in loose mineral is exclusive to Cargill in Canada. Our highly-palatable Right Now® Emerald helps ensure your cattle get optimum levels of Altosid®. Feeding horn fly control in a loose mineral eliminates the expense, labor and stress on your cattle associated with other control methods. There's no need to round up or handle cattle because the animals spread the fly control as they graze.

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