

DAIRY PIPELINE

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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.

Chemical controls are available after you mitigate any outstanding problems. Residual sprays for buildings and other facilities include permethrin, tetrachlorvinphos, malathion, pyrethrin, bifenthrin, deltamethrin, naled, or dichlorvos. Check the label for restrictions on use near cattle, feed, water, milk rooms, and milking equipment. Feed-through options for cows and calves and boluses for cattle over 300 pounds prevent flies from developing in manure. Cattle can also be treated with pour-on products containing permethrin, spinosad, and cyfluthrin. Check the label to ensure that applications are permitted on lactating cattle. You may opt to let your cattle apply fly control products to themselves via dust bags or cattle rubs. Rubs must be soaked in a base oil that helps transfer the product to the animal. Animals may hesitate to walk under a new rub that is hung across an aisle. Choose an access point to a vital area to encourage cattle to walk beneath the rub. Once the animals adjust to it, they will be treated more frequently and fly control will improve with time.

When using insect control methods, prevent resistance by rotating between different insecticide families, using varied control strategies, and using correct treatment rates.

—Laura Siegle,
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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

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Upcoming Activities

See [VTDairy](#) for details.

Monthly Round Table—JUNE
Discussion Group—Corn 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. Gonzalo 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](#)

If you are a person with a disability and require any auxiliary aids, services or other accommodations for any Extension event, please discuss your accommodation needs with the Extension staff at your local Extension office at least 1 week prior to the event.

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,
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seconds to list 215,000 results. Virginia farmers are not blind to this type of deadly incident, but deaths from manure pits over the last decade seem to be increasing. Searching “manure pit deaths in Virginia” resulted in 344,000 hits. Most of the articles talk about the 2007 Shenandoah Valley tragedy, where the farming community lost five members from one farm because they were overwhelmed by the deadly fumes created by manure. When incidents occur on farms dealing with manure pits, the outcome usually results in loss of life of several individuals. Our natural reaction is to help those in need, typically increasing the loss of life from one to many. Every farmer and employee should know the risks involved with the management and handling of manure.

Manure pits and lagoons need proper ventilation and according to The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health (NIOSH) every manure storage site should be treated like any other type of confined space. Storage of manure allows for the buildup of toxic fumes caused by hydrogen sulfide, methane, carbon dioxide, and other noxious gases like ammonia. As manure decomposes under anaerobic digestive fermentation it creates an oxygen-deficient and explosive atmosphere. To reduce loss of life all manure pits should be:

1. ventilated,
2. tested for atmospheric quality,
3. posted with hazardous signs,
4. fenced off from Humans and Animals.

All individuals needing to work around and in manure pits should:

1. Never enter a manure pit without backup!
2. Require one or more individual(s) to be present during entry.
3. Require proper equipment, breathing equipment, safety harnesses, and mechanical lifting equipment.

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 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.

—Cynthia Martel
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