

KEKA

August 30, 1983

GRUBS

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Sept. 19, 1985  
Aug 1986

This is Gary Markegard, University of California Farm Advisor, with a report on cattle grubs.

Have you seen a large, dark-colored fly with bands of orange or yellow ~~body~~ around your cattle? If you have, ~~these~~ <sup>they</sup> are probably heel flies.

Heel flies do not bite as is commonly believed. However, they do lay eggs on the animal hairs and this bothers the animals -- especially young ones. Their loud buzzing noise and the persistent attacks to lay eggs cause cattle to suddenly bolt and run with their tails high in the air.

It takes 4-7 days for the eggs to hatch into young grubs. The grubs penetrate the skin at the base of hairs and pass through to the muscle layer. Then the first-stage of the grub begins an 8-month migration from the stomach to the backline -- in the back the white-colored, second-stage grubs cut a breathing hole in the skin.

Grubs cost the livestock industry between 100 and 390 million dollars a year. This is due to weight loss from excessive running due to the heel fly and damage to the loin muscles from cysts forming around the grubs. The hide is also damaged by the grub holes.

There is no effective and economical treatment against adult heel flies or the eggs deposited on the animal. Systemic insecticides are available for excellent control of grubs if applied before the grubs reach the backline of the cattle. These insecticides may be applied as sprays, dips, a feed additive, or as a ready-to-use solution poured on the backline. The insecticide is absorbed into the blood system and distributed through the animal to kill the grubs in the body tissue.

The best time to treat grubs is between now and December. Be sure to follow the instructions on the label when treating the cattle.

This has been Gary Markegard, Humboldt County Farm Advisor, with a report on cattle grubs for ~~KEA~~. ~~KFR~~ KFLI