

May 15, 2007

UPCOMING DATES:

May 18, 2007
Show-Me-Select Heifer sale
Joplin, MO

June 2, 2007
Sheep & Goat Workshop
Houston, MO

June 6, 2007
AgroTerrorism Meeting
Madison County

June 13, 2007
Women in Ag Program
Patterson, MO

June 21, 2007
Goat Parasite Workshop
FAMACHA training
Doniphan, MO

August 1-4, 2007
Ripley County Fair
Doniphan, MO

August 22-25
Butler County Fair
Poplar Bluff, MO

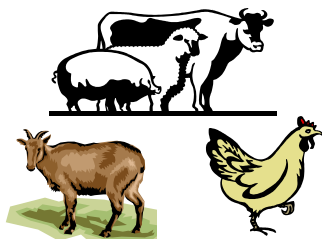
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EASTERN TENT CATERPILLARS POSSIBLE THREAT to HORSES

By Wayne Bailey and Craig Roberts

If you have pregnant mares and have noticed the growth of eastern tent caterpillars on your farm, it would be wise to consider controlling the caterpillars. In a next few weeks, mature tent caterpillar larvae will move from host trees and wander about searching for a suitable site in which to pupate and eventually emerge as moths. Large larvae can move into forage vegetation, at which time they could be consumed by horses. If this occurs, pregnant mares may experience serious foaling problems.

In Kentucky, six years ago, the equine industry suffered an epidemic called "mare reproductive loss syndrome," abbreviated MRLS. It caused the deaths of fetuses in all breeds of horses and cost the industry \$336 million. The losses were initially attributed to infected Kentucky 31 tall fescue. For a while, losses were attributed to poison hemlock, a toxic plant that had been growing on many of these horse farms. Today, MRLS has been linked to eastern tent caterpillars. The current thinking of researchers at the University of Kentucky is that as horses accidentally eat the caterpillars, the hairs of the caterpillars penetrate the digestive tract of the horses and cause bacterial infections. The result is death of the fetus.

Eastern tent caterpillar larvae are hairy in appearance with fuzzy covering of white hairs protruding from their black body. They have a white stripe running the length of the back and brown and yellow lines along each side. In addition, larvae will have a row of distinct oval blue spots present on each side.

The biology of this native North American insect begins with moths laying egg masses on the limbs of several tree species including wild cherry, apple, crab-apple, hawthorn, maple, pear, and plum. Egg masses containing from 150 to 400 eggs are laid in a ring around branches of the host tree where they will remain until spring. In early March the eggs hatch and larvae emerge. This insect is social in nature with larvae from individual egg masses staying together to spin a silken nest in limb crotches of their host tree. Larvae grow rapidly as they feed on developing leaves during early morning, late evening, and at night. During the day they often remain in the silken nest which protects the larvae from parasites, predators, and harsh weather conditions. In 4 to 6 weeks following emergence from the egg mass, larvae will be large in size and leave the host tree in order to locate a suitable sites in which to pupate. Moths will emerge and egg masses will be laid on host trees during late summer or early fall. Eastern Tent caterpillar is best controlled on the tree as insecticides for control on forages are limited. There are several products recommended for control on the tree. Contact your local Extension office for more information.

SHOW-ME SELECT HEIFER SALE REPORT

The fall-calving Show-Me-Select heifer sale held in Fruitland, MO showed that high feed prices and a tight hay supply are on producers minds this year. The 264 heifers sold for an average of \$1,145 each, down from the \$1,499 average last year in May. Buyer turnout was normal with buyers from Illinois, Kentucky, Arkansas, and Tennessee taking home heifers. The south central Show-Me-Select sale held May 12 averaged \$1,259 for 103 heifers. The last spring sale will be Saturday, May 18 in Joplin, MO.



FAMACHA® GOAT PARASITE WORKSHOP

Are you having a hard time deciding what dewormer to use on your goats or sheep this year? Is your current dewormer just not working well enough? Control of parasites, particularly the barber pole worm, is one of the biggest problems goat and sheep producers face. There is a growing problem of goats and sheep becoming resistant to many of the dewormers on the market today.

There are several things you can do to help prevent resistance to dewormers and also help reduce the number of times you deworm your animals. The Ripley County Extension office is sponsoring a goat parasite workshop on June 21 that includes a FAMACHA® training and certification program. The FAMACHA® program, developed in Africa, is an on-farm method to evaluate parasite infestation by comparing the mucous membranes of the eyes to a colored chart. The chart has five levels with level one animals being a healthy bright red color and five being almost white, indicating severe anemia. Anyone wishing to receive an eye chart must go through the training and pay the \$10 cost of the chart.

If you are interested in attending the goat parasite workshop on June 21, 2007 at the Ripley County Fairgrounds in Doniphan please call the Ripley County Extension office at 573-996-2921 by June 19 to sign up. The program will begin at 5:30 in the evening so we have enough daylight to evaluate live animals. Again, FAMACHA® eye charts will cost \$10 each if you are interested in purchasing one. You will need to pre-pay the money 2 weeks before the program to make sure the cards will be shipped in time. You also have the option to order cards after the program.

1st ANNUAL WOMEN IN AG CONFERENCE

The Wayne/Madison County Farm Service Agency is sponsoring the first annual Women in Ag conference on Wednesday, June 13, 2007 from 8:30 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. at the Patterson Community Center in Patterson, MO. The agenda includes topics on farm finance management, goats, fencing laws, estate planning, and gardening. The program is free, lunch is provided, and each person that attends will receive a canvas bag that includes materials donated by various businesses in both counties. Register before June 8th by contacting the USDA Farm Service Agency in Greenville at 224-3410 ext. 2.

WHEAT HAY

The Easter Freeze we had last month did some real damage to the wheat crop this year. I have not heard exact figures yet but most of the wheat crop was destroyed in southeast Missouri. One of the ways those farmers are trying to recoup losses is to harvest the wheat for hay. During a normal year, wheat harvested in the boot stage would be great hay for livestock. However, the extremely cold temperatures caused a high level of nitrates to be concentrated in the wheat plants. I have done a few "quick tests" for nitrate in wheat plants that have revealed no detectable nitrate levels. However, I have gotten a few calls where producers have gotten their hay tested and the nitrate levels were high enough to be deadly to livestock. If you come across a good deal on wheat hay or are thinking of harvesting some wheat for hay it would be in your best interest to have it tested for nitrate levels. Nitrate levels less than 3,000 parts per million or .3% is generally safe for all cattle. 3,000 to 5,000 ppm is generally safe for non-pregnant beef animals. Check with your local extension office or give me a call if you need to send a sample of wheat off to be evaluated or need a quick test performed.

SHEEP & GOAT WORKSHOP

The Top of the Ozarks RC&D is organizing a sheep and goat workshop on Saturday, June 2 at the Texas County Fairgrounds in Houston, MO. The program has several good speakers including Susan Schoenian from the University of Maryland and Beth Walker from Missouri State University. Registration is \$35 per person and \$10 extra for a FAMACHA certification. For more information contact the RC&D at 417-967-2028.

GRAZING SCHOOLS

There have been two grazing schools held for the southeast region this year. The limited space and large turnout caused some people to be turned away. If you happened to miss one and would like to attend this year, let me know as we may have enough interest to get another school organized. If you are willing to travel check the following website for dates of other grazing schools across the state.

<http://agebb.missouri.edu/mfgc/schools.htm>

FLY CONTROL

Fly season is upon us and now is the time to start controlling them. Fly populations of 100 or more per head of cattle have been shown to decrease weight gain by .2 to .3 pounds per day. If you are back-grounding calves for 90 days that amounts to 27 pounds less gain. Fall weaning weights can also be affected as much as 50 to 60 pounds per calf.

Horn flies are the most noticeable and abundant flies on pastured cattle. They are a blood-sucking fly that multiplies quickly and travels long distances to find cattle. Control should begin when 100 flies per head are observed. Stable flies are another biting fly that concentrate on the belly and legs of animals. Cattle will stand in water for long periods to get relief from stable flies. The threshold level of cattle to stable flies is 5 flies per leg before production is hurt. Horse flies are yet another blood-sucking fly that has been known to spread anaplasmosis in livestock because of their frequent feeding. Horse flies are the hardest of the flies to control. Face flies are the least threatening as far as production in cattle except for the fact they are one of the leading spreaders of pinkeye.

There are several control methods available that vary in effectiveness. No one method seems to be the "silver bullet" that works every year so rotating insecticides and using multiple methods will be your best bet. Pyrethroids and organophosphates are the most common chemicals used in fly control. Fly ear tags are fairly effective in controlling horn and face flies though they vary from year to year. You should not use the same chemical two years in a row to prevent flies from becoming resistant. Backrubbers, dust bags, and sprays are all effective if filled or soaked properly and continuously throughout the fly season. Typically a concentrated chemical is mixed with No. 2 fuel oil, No. 2 diesel fuel, or a label recommended mineral oil. Place dust bags and backrubs in places where cattle have to walk under them daily such as across a gate or around a mineral feeder or waterer. Some mineral feeders have a place to attach swaths of fabric soaked with insecticide so cattle have to brush up against them to eat the mineral. Fly traps that cattle walk through can be made and do reduce fly populations. Contact your local extension office for plans.

Oral fly control methods found in feeds or minerals that kill larvae in manure piles have moderate effectiveness. The product needs to be fed early in the fly season to see results. Be sure to compare the cost of the product to the profit you will see on gain of the animals.

A final fly control method is finding the cows

that have a genetic resistance to flies. It has been shown that genetic fly resistance is very heritable and those cows with low fly numbers typically have calves with low fly numbers. This can be another selection or culling tool you can use in your cow herd.

When it comes to fly control you should be very vigilant on keeping those dust bags and back rubs filled. You might also find out what your neighbor is using for fly control methods so you are not controlling his flies as well as yours.



FARROWING SCHOOL

A back-to-basics farrowing school, combining lectures with hands-on training, will be offered by the University of Missouri, June 26-27.

"This is a comprehensive program aimed at the people in the barn doing the work," said Tim Safranski, animal science associate professor.

Topics to be covered include sow management leading to farrowing, inducing farrowing, body condition, feeding lactating sows and creating micro-environments within the farrowing area for sows and piglets.

"One of the biggest challenges in managing a farrowing facility is we have a pig that wants a 65-degree temperature and another that wants a 95-degree temperature, both in the same 5-by-7-foot area," he said. In addition to presentations by MU animal science faculty, Duane Reese, University of Nebraska swine specialist, will lead sessions on lactation physiology and piglet nursing behavior.

The school, conducted in conjunction with the Missouri Pork Association, will be at the MU Animal Science Research Center.

Registration is \$100 in advance or \$125 at the door. To register or for more information, contact Tim Safranski at 573-884-7994 or via e-mail at safranskit@missouri.edu.



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University of Missouri, Lincoln University, Missouri Department of Agriculture, and Local Extension Councils Cooperating



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