

# MU Guide

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## Making and Using a Cattle Backrubber

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A well made, properly placed cattle backrubber will provide effective control of horn flies on beef and dairy cattle and will aid in control of face flies.

If the backrubber is kept soaked with a recommended insecticide, cattle lice also can be controlled satisfactorily throughout the year.



Figure 1. Place a backrubber where cattle must use it. Hang it in a gateway between the main pasture and the water source.



Figure 2. A backrubber works well in a gateway used regularly by cattle. Inside a loafing shed is also a good location. Mineral blocks can be used to encourage cattle to pass under the backrubber.

### Making a backrubber

Most of the materials you will need to make a backrubber are readily available on the farm. However, if all the materials are purchased new, the cost will be about \$25 to \$30.

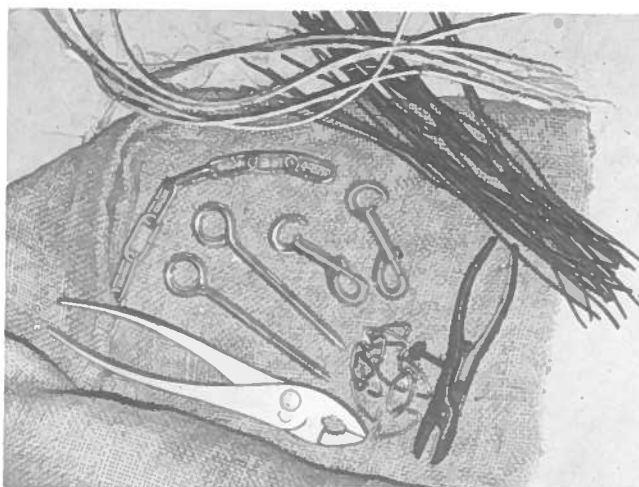


Figure 3. Materials needed to make a backrubber include: sturdy chain, 16 to 20 feet long; 30 to 40 pieces of binder twine, 15 inches long; 20 to 25 pieces of baling wire, 12 inches long; 18 to 20 burlap bags; 15 to 20 hog rings; 2 hooks, 2 screw eyes; hog ring pliers and regular pliers.

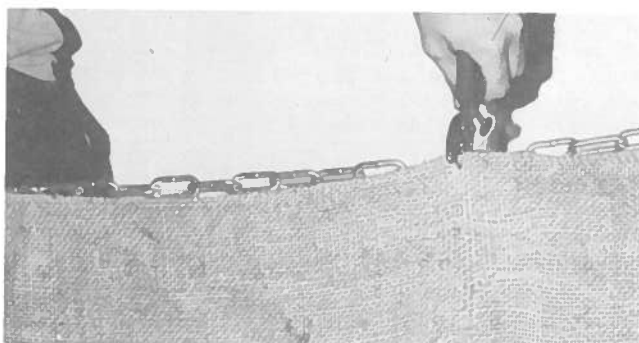


Figure 4. Secure first layer of bags to chain with three hog rings, one at each end and one in the middle of each bag. Place bags to within 18 inches of each end of the chain.

## Charging the backrubber

Charge the backrubber by mixing a recommended insecticide with fuel oil and soaking the burlap with the mixture. A backrubber usually will hold about a gallon of mixture.

A new backrubber should be gradually soaked to hold the full charge.

**Do not let cattle use a backrubber that is dripping with insecticide mixture.**

## Recommended insecticides

See MU Guides G7000, *Fly Control on Dairy Cattle*; G7010, *Fly Control on Beef Cattle*; and G7011, *Beef Cattle Lice Control* for current insecticide recommendations.

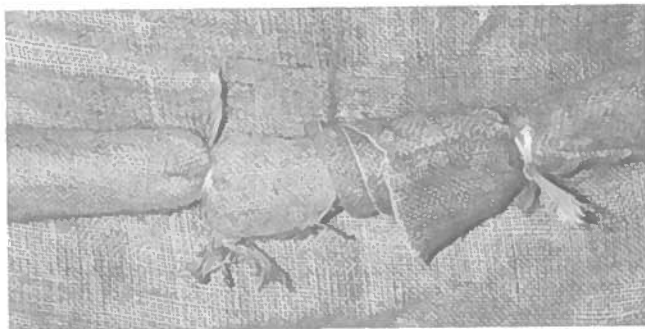


Figure 5. Roll bags tightly onto chain and tie each end with binder twine. Lap the second layer of bags over the first as shown; roll tightly and tie with binder twine.

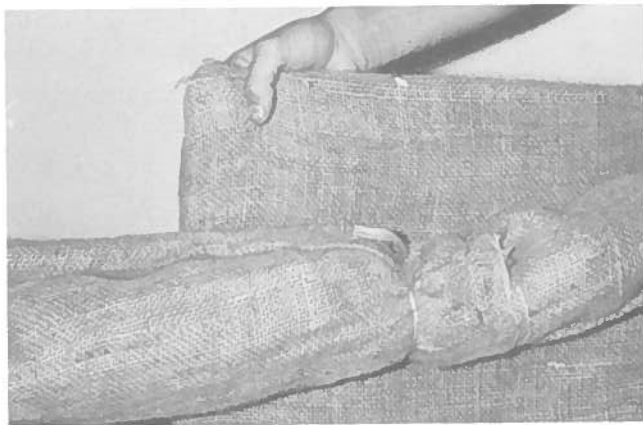


Figure 6. Tightly wrap the third and fourth layers of the bags and overlap about 6 to 8 inches as shown. Four layers of bags should make a backrubber about 4 to 5 inches thick.

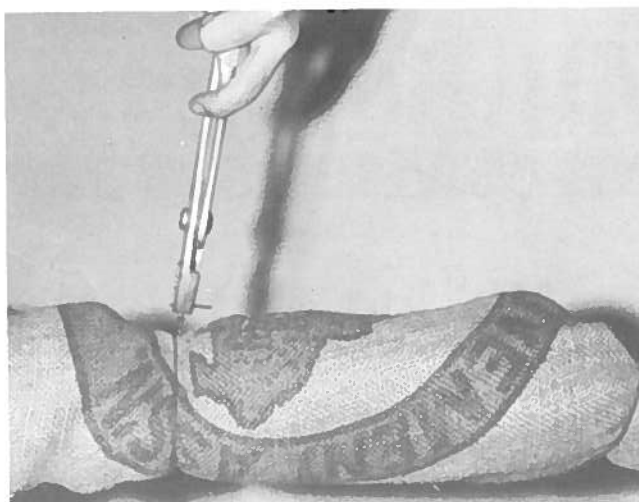


Figure 7. Twist baling wire tightly about every 8 inches along entire length of backrubber. Clip ends of wire and drive cut ends into burlap to keep from injuring animals when they use the backrubber.



Figure 8. Backrubbers may be attached to posts or trees with hooks and screw-eyes or by wrapping the chain around a tree branch and fastening with a bolt. Adjust the chain so the middle is 16 to 18 inches above the ground.