

odor, but they do catch thousands of flies. (The worse they smell, the more flies they seem to attract.) You may need to experiment with locations and heights to find the spots that attract the most flies. Once you find the right locations, they fill quickly.

The traps can be messy to dispose of, but some brands use containers that can be easily sealed.

Sticky tapes can also be used to catch flies, but they can trap other creatures, such as small birds, as well. Also, high dust levels in the barn can render sticky traps less effective. One convenient example: Mr. Sticky offers a rolled form of non-toxic tape. It traps flies on the tape and, once full, you simply roll it onto the disposable wheel, exposing fresh tape.

Other mechanical approaches: Bug zappers have a light that attracts the flies and the electricity kills them. Another form of mechanical control is simply to run fans in your barn. Flies do not like moving air. In the summer, if horses can be brought into the barn where fans are running during the day, that can provide some relief. Horses that live outside should at least have access to some form of shade to escape the worst of the flies.

PHYSICAL BARRIERS

Regardless of your best efforts at fly control, some pesky survivors will continue to pester your horses. You can protect them with physical barriers such as fly masks, fly sheets and leg wraps. These are typically made of lightweight mesh. It is important to make sure that all equipment fits the horse properly, so that it doesn't rub or gap. On a farm with large numbers of horses, it may be simply too expensive or labor-intensive to provide fly gear for all horses.

INSECTICIDE OPTIONS

Insecticides, chemicals that kill or repel flies, are available in many forms and applications: sprays, lotions, wipes, and roll-ons among them. Some horses and humans have allergic reactions to insecticides, so it is best to try a product first in a small area until you know how the horse

will react. Barnwide systems from companies such as Pyranha Inc., Innovative Equine Systems or United Spray Systems can be built into barns. These use automatic misters that spray insecticide every 15 minutes. This is a more expensive option but can be an effective means of control. There are also natural alternatives for barn sprayers, such as those from Nature's Balance Care.

Another option comes from Bayer Animal Health, which manufactures QuickBayt, an attractant that kills house flies. It comes in a bait form that you scatter, disposable strips and a spray for targeted application. QuickBayt also contains two attractants and a very bitter substance that discourages accidental ingestion by children and animals.

Also available on the market are feed-through fly preventatives such as Solitude IGR from Pfizer, Equitrol II from Farnam and SimpliFly from Equicare. These typically come in pelleted or powdered form and are added to the horse's grain. When the

horse consumes the feed-through, the active ingredient passes through the horse and is excreted in the manure. Flies lay eggs in the manure, but they are not able to develop and die off. Within four to six weeks, there should be a dramatic decrease in the number of adult flies. In addition, a number of natural feed supplement products containing garlic and other ingredients may also discourage flies.

The methods you decide to use to control flies are often limited by the number of horses in your care, cost, labor, and environmental concerns. It may be helpful to contact the county extension agent in your area to help address your specific needs. Regardless, a multi-pronged approach, with proper manure management as your number one factor, is your best bet in the continuous war on flies.

For more information about fly control or related subjects, visit www.stable-management.com and click on the "Fly & Pest Control" channel. To comment on this article, click on "current issue."

For More Information

To learn more about specific fly control products, contact the following companies.

- Absorbine: Fly control products, www.absorbine.com
- Arbico Organics: Fly control fly eliminators, www.arbico-organics.com
- Bayer Animal Health: Fly control products, www.bayer-ah.com
- Epps Biting Fly Trap: Fly control equipment, www.horselineproducts.com
- Farmtek: Fly control products, www.farmtek.com
- Farnam: Fly control products, www.farnam.com
- Horse Health USA: Fly control products, www.horsehealthusa.com
- Innovative Equine Systems: Fly control equipment and systems, www.equinesystems.com
- Mr. Sticky: Fly tape system, www.mrsticky.com
- Natures Balance Care: Natural insect control products, www.naturesbalancecare.com
- O2Compost: Aerated composting, www.o2compost.com
- Pfizer: Fly control products, www.pfizerah.com
- Pro-Tech Livestock Corp.: Fly control products, www.protech-control.com
- Pyranha Inc.: Insect control systems, www.pyranhainc.com
- SimpliFly: Feed-through fly control, www.simplifyfeedthru.com
- SmartPak: Fly control products, www.smartpakequine.com
- Spalding Labs: Fly control fly predators, www.spalding-labs.com
- Sweet PDZ: Fly control products, www.sweetpdz.com
- United Spray Systems: Fly control system, www.automist.com
- Valley Vet: Fly control products, www.valleyvet.com