



Influence of Fly Control on Incidence  
of Pinkeye and on Calf Performance

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Summary

Controlling flies significantly decreased incidence of pinkeye in cattle on native Flint Hill range. There was no difference in the average weaning weight of groups sprayed or not sprayed. However individuals severely affected with pinkeye were much lighter than the average.

Introduction

Some type of fly control is usually recommended for cows and calves on summer pasture in Kansas. However the value of fly control is not well established. Nor have the relationships between fly control and incidence of pinkeye or between fly control and calf performance been evaluated. We studied those relationships for this report.

Experimental Procedure

Sixty-two yearling heifers and cows with 32 calves were sprayed with 4% Rabon as needed to control flies (every 7 to 14 days from May 15 to September 20). No fly control was used with another group of 62 yearling heifers and cows with 34 calves.

Cattle were checked several times a week. Individuals with pinkeye were treated with  $\frac{1}{2}$  to 1 cc subconjunctival injection of antibiotic-corticosteroid mixture (dosage varied by size of animal).

Calves grazed spring-burned, native Bluestem pasture. All Cattle were weighed each month and the calves were weaned October 21 at an average age of 208 days.

Results

About 10% fewer cows had pinkeye in the fly-control group. Approximately 70% of the calves in each group had pinkeye; however those in the no-fly-control group averaged having pinkeye 2.3 times each, while those in the fly-control group averaged having pinkeye 1.6 times. Calves in the fly-

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control group required 1.44 treatments per case of pinkeye compared with 1.74 treatments for those in the no-fly-control group. Sixty-four percent of all pinkeye treatments were on cattle in the no-fly-control group.

Greatest advantage of fly control in reducing pinkeye was early summer. Before July 15, 84% of the pinkeye treatments were on cattle in the no-fly-group. Cases of pinkeye were most numerous the last half of July. After July the incidence of pinkeye decreased and occurred about equally in both groups.

Average weaning weights of calves did not differ between groups, probably because most calves completely recover from pinkeye. However, some are permanently affected with impaired vision. In this study one calf was blind and had a 205-day adjusted weight 120 lbs. less than the average.

Because so many animals required treatment for pinkeye, both groups were handled about the same number of times.