



HOUSE FLIES AND STABLE FLIES:

COMPARATIVE FACTS OF BIOLOGY AND BEHAVIOR

WITH IMPLICATIONS FOR SAMPLING AND CONTROL

1. House flies do not bite; stable flies do (both male and female)
2. House flies leave gray, orange, pale yellow, and brown specks of feces and regurgita. Stable flies leave black specks which are the product of blood digestion.
3. House flies rest on nearly any surface, but tend to be more abundant high on walls, on rafters, or on strings (or sticky fly coils) or light bulbs projecting or hanging from the ceiling. Stable flies rest mostly on surfaces within 3 feet of the ground.
4. House flies rest with their bodies parallel to the substrate. Stable flies rest with their head higher than their tail--like a "tail dragger" airplane.
5. Adult house flies utilize garbage, manure, uncovered foodstuffs, and a wide array of other organic materials for food. Adult stable flies feed only on blood; they attack dogs' ears, people (especially on the legs), and most large animals (also especially on the legs).
6. Cyclic daily activity patterns of house flies probably vary greatly with the type and availability of food. Stable flies usually feed once or twice daily, seeking animals in greatest number between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. However, you may see some stable flies on animals from shortly after daybreak until dusk.
7. Oviposition sites, hence larval development sites, for house flies are also diverse. House flies utilize manure ranging from fresh to well aged, in addition to other unsanitary media. Stable flies seldom oviposit on manure until it is 2 or 3 weeks old. Stable fly larvae also develop in compost piles, piles of grass clippings or weeds that are moist enough to begin fermenting, and urine-soaked straw or hay.
8. Maggots have pointed anteriors and broad, blunt rear ends. On the rear end of each maggot are two black spots. The spots are spiracles or breathing pores. On house fly maggots the spiracles are closer together than the width of a spiracle. On stable fly maggots the spiracles are separated by the width of a spiracle or more.
9. House flies develop from egg to adult in as little as 7 to 10 days. Stable flies require 16 days to 5 weeks, usually 3 to 4 weeks.

10. House flies usually live and die within a half mile of where they are produced. Stable flies, also, are usually more abundant close to their source--but they sometimes fly many miles creating a nuisance far away from their source.
11. Stable flies are usually most abundant on cattle in May and June. Then they diminish in number and house flies become numerous in July through September. If there are rains and a cool period in August there may be another flare-up of stable flies.
12. House flies are attracted to sugar baits. They are attracted for short distances and arrested by baits containing Z(9) tricosene, Muscamone, or Muscalure, three names for a house fly sex pheromone. House flies are attracted to many stinking substances and may be somewhat attracted to carbon dioxide. Stable flies are not attracted to sugar, house fly sex pheromone, nor to stinking substances in general. Stable flies are highly attracted to carbon dioxide and to fresh blood. They are also attracted to a translucent plexiglas product known as Alsynite.

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