Sheep bot (head bot, nasal bot)

*Oestrus ovis*

**Description:** Adult flies are 1 to 5/8 inch long, wide-bodied, mottled yellowish to gray-brown, and quite hairy; mouthparts are rudimentary. Larvae are grublike maggots that reach one to one and one-fourth inch in length.

**Domestic animals affected:** sheep, goats.

**Damaged caused:** extreme annoyance during larviposition; later, during larval development, a snotty and sometimes bloody nasal discharge, loss of appetite, vigorous head shaking, secondary infection of the sinuses; sometimes death.

**Development:** complete metamorphosis: egg (hatches within female), larval stages, pupa, adult fly.

**Generational time:** typically one year, but spring larviposition may result in a complete developmental cycle that produces adults within 10 to 12 weeks.

**Larviposition site:** Sheep bot flies do not oviposit; larvae hatch within the female fly; she deposits them in or near the host’s nostrils.

**Larval habitat, feeding:** Larvae feed on mucosal tissue of nasal passages and frontal sinuses of the host. Fully grown larvae exit the nostrils and pupate in debris on the soil for 3 to 6 weeks or more, depending on temperature.

**Adult habitat, feeding:** Like other bot flies, adult sheep bot flies have incompletely formed mouthparts and do not feed. They live for up to 4 weeks, long enough to mate and develop eggs ready to hatch for larviposition.

**Method of dispersal or infestation:** by host-seeking flight of adult females and, as larvae, by host mobility and transportation.

**Seasonality:** Larviposition may occur early summer to late autumn. Parasitism by larvae may be ongoing any month of the year.

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