Stable fly

*Stomoxys calcitrans*

Photo by Gerald Greene, K-State Research and Extension

**Description:** Similar to a house fly in size, ca. 5/16 inch long; a gray fly with distinct black spots on the abdomen. A slender, black, piercing mouthpart projects forward from the bottom of the head.

**Domestic animals affected:** cattle, swine, horses, sheep, goats, dogs; nuisance pest in poultry units.

**Damage caused:** Annoyance from painful bites, blood loss; reduced milk production, feeding efficiency, and rate of gain; may transmit equine infectious anemia (swamp fever), porcine eperythrozoonosis, vesicular stomatitis of cattle and horses, and a mechanical vector of pathogens including anthrax, brucellosis, Salmonella, and others.

**Development:** Complete metamorphosis: egg three larval instars (maggots), pupa, and adult

**Generational time:** Typically 3 to 4 weeks.

**Oviposition site:** Fermenting grass clippings, green chop, compost piles, spilled feed, manure- and urine-contaminated hay or straw, manure (especially that which is over 3 weeks old).

**Larval habitat, feeding:** Larvae feed in substrate from the oviposition site, taking nutrients primarily from the microbial flora and fauna therein.

**Adult habitat, feeding:** Off host, stable flies prefer shelter from win, mostly within 3 feet of ground level; seek host animals and suck blood once or twice daily, preferring legs and feet of most mammals (including humans) and ears of swine and dogs; stable flies usually orient themselves with their tail end toward the ground while on a host; daytime biters.

**Method of dispersal or infestation:** strong fliers, stable flies sometimes "migrate" many miles; they’ll find a host in sunshine or deep shade.

**Seasonality:** in Kansas, adults have been captured in every month of the year; seldom numerous before April and most abundant in May and June; later rains sometimes extend the period of trouble from this pest.

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