

## House fly

*Musca domestica*



Photo by Gerald Greene, K-State Research and Extension

**Description:** gray fly, ca. ¼ to 5/16 inch long; four dark stripes on dorsum of thorax, gray-yellow venter of abdomen; sponging mouthpart; face between eyes and mouth is golden.

**Domestic animals affected:** nuisance and potential mechanical vector of disease agents to humans and virtually all terrestrial animals.

**Damage caused:** nuisance to livestock when abundant on feed and on their faces; nuisance to producers and neighbors; mechanically spreads many kinds of microbial pathogens to livestock via its feces, regurgita, and microbes adhering to fly body and leg surfaces; e.g., mastitis, *Salmonella*, poultry pullorum, anthrax, polio, and many more.

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

**Generational time:** as few as 8 days, usually 10 to 14 days.

**Oviposition site:** excrement of humans and other animals, whether fresh or aged; garbage, virtually any decaying plant or animal materials.

**Larval habitat, feeding:** larvae inhabit and feed on substrates listed as oviposition sites, taking soluble nutrients directly from the substrate as well as feeding on the microbial flora and fauna living in the substrate.

**Adult habitat, feeding:** Time spent on "hosts" is incidental and opportunistic; these flies rest on nearly any surface including trees, weeds, crops, structures, and soil near livestock units. They are especially likely to rest at night in building rafters or high on walls. Adults feed on decaying plant and animal matter, manure, and solubles such as sugars. Repeated salivation, ingestion, regurgitation aids in predigestion.

**Method of dispersal or infestation:** Adults fly well; usually stay within a mile or two of their origins.

**Seasonality:** April through mid-October, but most abundant in Kansas during hot June-to-early-September period.

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