



Field Notes for The Week Of 5-30-2022

Shew Fly! Don't Bother Me or My Cattle!

The month of May is wrapping up and June is on its way in and hopefully with a little less rainfall to boot. The week of May 23rd through the 28th brought heavy rainfall and some severe storms to southern Ohio. The soggy week slowed planting and hay harvest down considerably with very little to no progress made to corn or soybean planting. Some producers have been working on getting nitrogen applied to early planted corn that is reaching the v2 stage of growth and close to v3. Both soybeans and corn that have been planted look to be in good condition with some damage to early season pest such as slugs and flea beetle feeding. Forage crops are in dire need of being cut as they continue to mature and quality degrades after each rain event we have. Forage fields with red clover and ladino clover are at the perfect stage for harvest as most fields are at 10-20% bloom. Even with the rain, I did manage to get out and make a few field visits to look at some alfalfa struggling with some disease pressure called stemphylium leaf spot and some Black stem spot. These diseases are spread by spores in the air that are picked up and moved in the weather system. Like most fungal pathogens climate makes a big difference on the severity of damage, wet and humid weather make damage much more prevalent. Managing the disease is also a challenge due to long harvest restrictions on fungicides and little to no resistant varieties available on the market.

Fungal pathogens are not the only thing causing a challenge on the farm these days, flies are also making their troublesome mark too. With plenty of moisture and rainfall stable flies, face flies, and the horn fly is also irritating farmers and their livestock. Flies can cause many stresses to livestock, causing reduced performance and even illnesses that can cause farmers a lot of money and time treating. One of the major disease issues that can arise from flies is Infectious Bovine keratoconjunctivitis or also known as pink eye. Just as the name implies, pinkeye is very contagious, spreading from one animal to the other. The spreader is none other than the fly. Pink eye is caused by a bacteria called *Moraxella bovis*. This bacteria contain hairlike projections that stick to the surface of the eye called Pili. *Moraxella bovis* virus also creates Cytotoxin, which gives the most damaging effect of pink eye, the ulcers created from damaged cornea cells. Spreading of the bacteria can be from direct contact of nasal discharge, or tear transfer from one animal to the other, this is where the flies make their way in the picture. Some ways to prevent pink eye in your herd are also follows.

- **Build up herd immunity-** Good herd health is critical, maintaining a good nutritional program and throughout the whole year is critical, providing clean water, and a well-developed mineral program can go a long way in preventing pinkeye.
- **Eliminate the fly's environment-** Eliminating areas where flies can breed and reproduce are critical. Wet areas along creek bottoms and manure build up around feeding areas are two common areas where fly populations can be high.
- **Separate infected animals-** Animals that show early signs of pink eye such as eye squinting, watery eyes, separation from other animals, or frequent rubbing should be separated from the rest of the herd and treated.
- **Vaccinate-** Consulting with your veterinarian about a vaccination program. Some veterinarians have developed their own strands of vaccine by scraping the eyes surface to collect the Pili bacteria and then developing a strain resistance. The reasoning behind this is to develop resistance of the strain that is localized in the area. Even though commercial vaccines have only shown about 50% effective it can still help build animals immunity.

