

Dollar Drain

Dollar Saving Tips for Texas Dairies

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DON'T FORGET THE FLY CONTROL THIS SUMMER

Have you already implemented your summer plan? Within those plans have you included fly abatement?

Recently a research trail was conducted at the Texas A&M dairy center to study the behavior of high versus low producing cows. These two groups of cow were continually videotaped for a four-day period in each of the four seasons. This allowed classification of cows into categories such as: lying, eating, drinking, standing, etc. for this 96-hour period.

Total time standing was affected by season, with the cows standing less during winter, than during the fall, spring and summer trials. This could be directly related to the cows during winter spending significantly more total time lying. Total standing was also affected by the time of the day, with more cows standing during the day, when there was more activity going on.

During the spring and summer trials, cows spent more time standing in the central lot area than during the fall and winter trials. During the spring there was a problem with stable flies and the cows tended to stand close together at the corner of the lot next to the feed trough for long periods of time. Bunching is a natural phenomena to protect themselves from the flies.

Although intake was not measured in this trial, if cows are spending more time standing than eating intake declines. An indirect influence of the bunching was that other cows were prohibited from getting to the feed troughs.

Flies did impact profitability. Flies are more than a nuisance, they impact not only feed consumption but also serve as a disease and mastitis vector. So as you think about what fans or sprinkler to add, also consider how to control the flies.

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