

Fly parasites for nuisance fly control



Nuisance flies (house flies and stable flies) can be a significant problem for humans and animals. Flies are not only uncomfortable for animals and workers but also vector organisms that cause disease. Fly-stressed animals tend to use up extra energy, leading to reduced production. They often bunch together in an effort to reduce surface area. This can lead to overheating and weight loss.

Reliance on the use of chemicals to control nuisance flies has several disadvantages:

- development of insecticide resistant fly populations
- potential contamination of the environment and meat/milk products
- harm to fly parasites and other beneficial insects

Bugs for Bugs has a reliable and effective biological alternative.

We produce a nuisance fly parasite mix. This includes three wasp species which are all efficient biocontrol agents of nuisance flies.

Our fly parasites are tiny wasps (2 to 3 mm in length) that are naturalised to Australia. They only target nuisance flies and are **harmless to other animals and humans**. Adult female wasps lay their eggs in fly pupae. After hatching each wasp larva feeds on the fly pupa host, ultimately killing it before it can develop into an adult fly. After about three weeks an adult wasp emerges to mate and continue the cycle.

Fly parasites are **easy to handle and release**. They are supplied as the immature stage (parasitised fly pupae). These should be placed into a release unit positioned near fly breeding sites (e.g. manure, silage pits, drains and sedimentation basins). Release units offer protection to our parasite mix while they are in the vulnerable pupal stage prior to adult wasp emergence. These release units are available from Bugs for Bugs.

For dairy environments we recommend releasing around 200 fly parasites per animal per fortnight from early spring to autumn. Warmer areas in the north with persistent nuisance fly problems benefit from year-round releases.

At Bugs for Bugs we encourage farmers to adopt an **integrated pest management (IPM)** approach to nuisance fly control which includes:

- Practice good sanitation. This impedes fly breeding and assists the establishment of natural enemies including wasp parasites.
- Regularly remove fly breeding substrates such as manure, spilt feed and vegetation.
- Carcasses should be covered completely (preferably more than 1m deep) to prevent blowflies from breeding.
- Mow vegetation around feedlots, sedimentation systems and effluent ponds to reduce areas where flies can shelter.
- Use yellow sticky traps or rolls (also available from Bugs for Bugs) to mass trap adult flies wherever practical.

Fly parasites are sensitive to chemicals. If required, we suggest the use of larvicides (e.g. cyromazine) which are less harmful to wasps and the environment and provide better control over time. Granular baits and bait strips also work well with biological control. ■■

For further information on how these fly parasites can reduce the nuisance fly problem on your farm visit our website www.bugsforbugs.com.au or phone David on 0459 974 960.

