

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 wind, 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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