Horn Flies: A Nuisance for Cattle

By Jesse Fulton, Associate Director — Producer Education

With the arrival of warmer weather across the United States, fly control should be on the minds of most cattle producers. The most common species of flies that affect cattle are House, Stable, and Horn flies. However, the Horn fly, Haematobia irritans irritans (L.), is one of the most notable pests that affect grazing cattle in the country. It has been established that Horn flies have the greatest economic impact in the cattle industry, and it is estimated that Horn flies cost the U.S. cattle industry between $700 million to $1 billion annually. The most notable losses are noted in lactating cattle and growing calves when Horn fly populations are greater than 100 – 200 per animal.

The annoyance caused by Horn flies results in energy expenditure and altered grazing patterns, which can reduce milk production of lactating cows and weight gain of suckling calves and stocker cattle. Studies have indicated that in severe Horn fly infestations, calves from cows that are infested with Horn flies have been observed to have a 12 – 20 pound decrease in weaning weights.

Further, University of Arkansas researchers have reported a 17 pound decrease in calf weaning weight for every 100 Horn flies per animal. The most notable losses are noticed following the presentations. Young Beef Leader Spotlight

Working on the Future for the Tenth Generation

By Amber Miller, NCBA Region VI Young Beef Leader Representative

It’s a typical start of the day at our house. Everyone is up at 4:30 a.m., breakfast is being cooked, a seminary lesson is taught, lunches packed and everyone is out the door by 6 a.m. I head to the bus stop to get our two best hands on their way to school. The bus will be missed today just like they are everyday. It’s back to the house to grab a coffee jacket, my phone and hat and the walkie-talkies and off to the farm.

Today we will be gathering 300 pair to move across the ranch to make Saturday’s move shorter and easier. We make our home on a ranch at the base of the Ruby Mountains in Northeastern Nevada where we run 1,300 cow-calf pairs and Plains Buffalo. Our children are 9th-generation ranchers and we hope that there will be a 10th generation we have a lot of work both here at home and nationally as well. Since February 2015 I have had the unique opportunity to serve as the Region VI Young Beef Leader Representative for National Cattlemen’s Beef Association. This has given me a close up view as to what NCBA is doing for families like mine across this great nation by tackling the big issues like promoting the Trans-Pacific Partnership, beef in the Dietary Guidelines and fighting the EPA ruling of WOTUS. The Beef Check-off is promoting our product with myth-busters and new innovative products. In April I had the chance to attend the Legislative Conference hosted by NCBA and held in Washington D.C. My husband, Travis, and our two children, Tanner and Holland, traveled with me to the conference and were able to participate in the meetings.

It was a great learning experience for Tanner and Holland as they spent the weeks before Legislative conference studying the Trans-Pacific Partnership and the Antiquities Act. The hours they spent preparing for visits on Capitol Hill were eye-opening to them as they started to get an up close and personal glimpse as to the reality of governmental influences in agriculture.

It made my heart smile as I listened to both of them have real conversations with our Senators and Representatives about how the decisions they were making now were going to affect the future for those 12 and 15-year-olds. When a congress woman who is opposing TPP listened to Tanner and was given a new point of view about this bill I saw her countenance soften and I have to admit it was a proud mom moment. Her vote may have not changed but Tanner had the chance to share his story and his desires for the future of the cattle industry, his voice was heard on the hill in April.

It is experiences like this that make me thankful for NCBA. We try to participate to the best of our ability but we have ranches to run and mouths to feed and we can’t do it all. As an industry we are blessed that there are those capable and able to devote their full attention to the cattle industry on a daily basis and put the kind of care, creativity and concern into the industry that we do for our own individual ranches. I sleep a little more peacefully at night knowing that the work NCBA does on my behalf and yours focuses on the future and that work combined with the work we are doing here at home will hopefully produce the 10th generation of Miller ranchers.

The Miller family visiting the Capitol.