

**\*\*ASK THE TAFE TEAM\*\***

**With Rural Studies Teacher, Ty Bauer  
10 March, 2016**

**Question:** *Buffalo flies – how do they affect me and how do I combat them?*

**Answer:** This season a lot of South-East Queensland beef producers have said that we're facing one of the worst cases of buffalo fly outbreaks in years. Additionally, some producers are reporting resistant strains of buffalo flies in their herd.

Understanding the threat of buffalo fly to a herd is very important as this time of the year with maximum humidity in most areas right across the majority of Queensland. Australia wide buffalo flies are estimated to cost the cattle industry \$20-30 million dollars every year.

It is important as producers that we understand how to control this pest in a viable economic and sustainable manner for your business.

**Know when to treat your animals**

Make sure the welfare of the animal is not jeopardised with regular herd observations and monitoring. A lot of producers are using Integrated Pest Management (IPM) strategies: the use of both chemical and non-chemical control methods, such as fly traps, or the introduction/monitoring of dung beetle activities in the paddock.

**Manage susceptible cattle in your herd**

Some cattle have a natural reaction to buffalo flies. These animals should be managed appropriately as the flies seem to affect the welfare of this type animal more significantly.

**Know what treatment to use**

It is important to rotate your active constituent in chemicals for long term effectiveness against any pest to minimise the risk of resistance. Also take into consideration if the chemical you are using is dung beetle friendly as dung beetles are known for their ability to bury the manure in the ground which makes it difficult for the buffalo fly eggs to survive. Farmers have also been known to use natural remedies such as citronella oil in back rubbers in rotation with a chemical based control method.

It is important to have an understanding of all your options for the control of pests on your property and have an appropriate action plan to combat such pests. Good luck, and happy farming.

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