Preventing Nuisance Flies

As Summer draws near, the season for nuisance and biting flies is here.

These flies are not only annoying and relentless, but their bites cause severe skin irritations on horses. Flies settle on the moist areas of the body, such as the corners of the eyes. Large numbers can cause irritation and ulceration of the area.

This can cause a serious problem, especially around the eyes as it can lead to conjunctivitis. Bush and house flies do not bite, but their habit of feeding on wounds and around the eyes, nostrils and the mouth can cause considerable annoyance to horses and disturb their feeding, rest and general comfort.

Buffalo flies have spread south from Queensland and northern New South Wales. They can cause irritation and sores on the ears, eyes and abdomen. In heavy infestation, severe mutilation can occur.

Queensland itch is very common in the northern parts of Australia. However, it is not confined to these areas as it occurs wherever sand flies exist. When the horse is bitten by a sand fly, small bumps develop on the skin. The lump is intensely itchy. The horse rubs itself, causing loss of hair. Serum oozes from the skin and causes scabs to form. In chronic cases, the skin becomes thickened and corrugated, especially along the flank, neck, buttocks and tail.

Once or twice a day, stable flies come to the horse, feed vigorously for a minute or two, and then return to the shade to digest their food. These bites can cause intense irritation in some horses. The bites appear as small raised lumps with a central scab.

So, what can be done to ease this burden on horses?

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SWAT is a highly concentrated, low irritant formulation of permethrin designed to provide maximum residual activity against sand flies, stable flies and buffalo flies. SWAT is rain-resistant and will not wash off during rain periods, and it’s easy to apply. Simply use the supplied applicator mitt and wipe it over the horse. Applied no more than once a week, SWAT’s highly concentrated formula protects against buffalo flies, stable flies and sand flies.

In fact, a 250mL bottle will give the average horse two months protection (8 applications). Twice that for a 500mL bottle. SWAT will, therefore, deliver to you and your horse safe, long-lasting and superior protection against nuisance flies.