

Polk County AgriLife Extension Beef/Forage & Natural Resources Newsletter

Local Programs

East Texas Natural Resources Tours: fisheries and waterfowl management, July 7

Produce Growers Breakfast: Insect Control, July 28

Beef and Forage Workshop, August 25

Produce Growers Breakfast: Rainwater Harvesting, September 29

East Texas Wildlife Expo, October 6

Additional AgriLife Programs

Beef Cattle Short Course, August 7-9

AgriLife Learn Online Courses

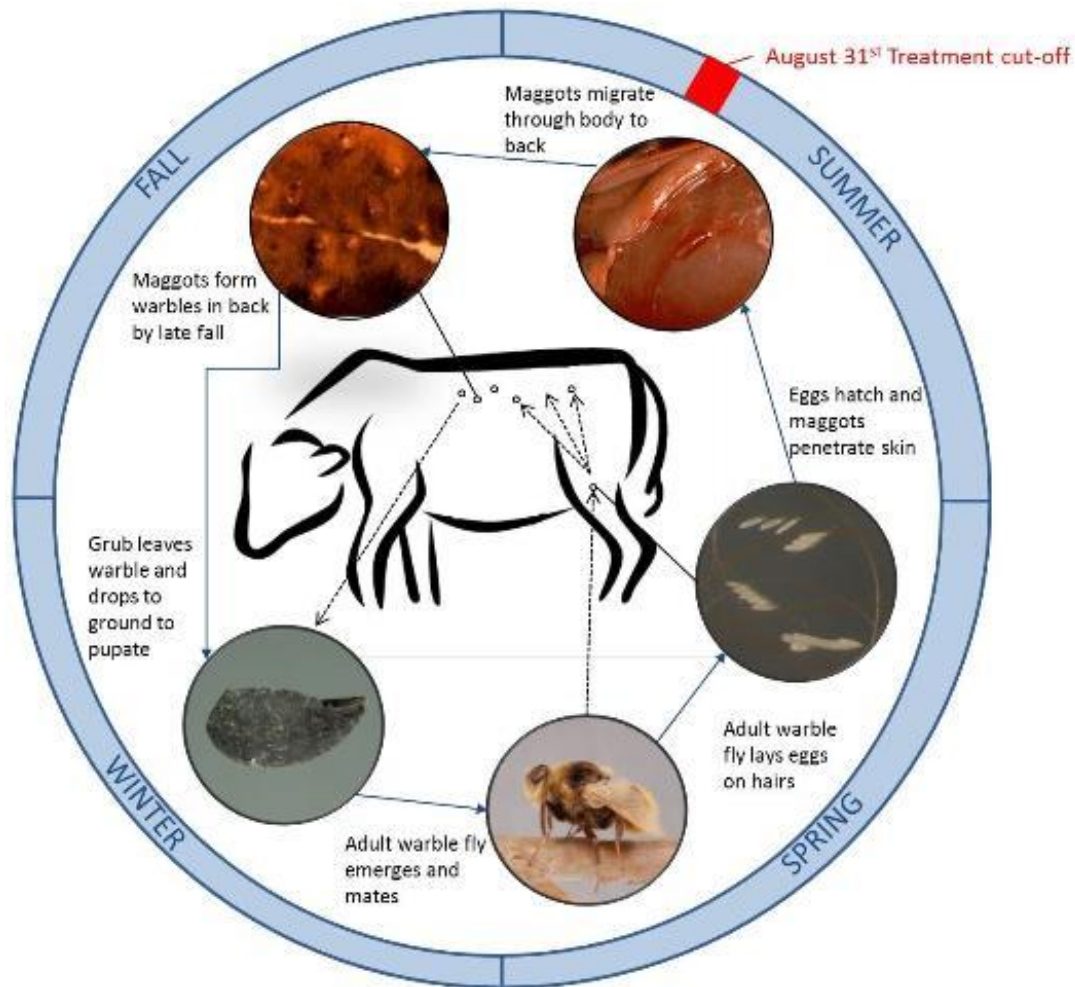
Cattle Grubs

Have you ever heard of cattle grubs? Many new ranchers probably have not since this is a cattle pest that has not been a major issue in Texas for many years. For many of our tenured ranchers they can probably recall a time when cattle grubs were common amongst cattle herds. Unfortunately, extension entomologist and veterinarians are slowly starting to see more and more issues with cattle grubs over the past few years, so it is a good time to review what exactly is cattle grubs.

Cattle grubs are basically maggots that are the immature larvae of the heel fly. The complete life cycle of a heel fly takes an entire year. In the spring an adult heel fly, which has similar coloring to a bee, lays eggs on cattle hair in the lower regions of the body. The fly lands next to the cattle and then walks up the animal's body to lay its eggs. The eggs hatch within a week and then the cattle grub or maggot will then penetrate the skin at the base of the hair follicle. During the summer the maggots will migrate through the body until they reach the back. During this time the grubs continue to grow and by the time they reach the back will be at least ½ inch in length. Grubs will reach the back during the fall months and will cut a breathing hole called a warble pore. Grubs will stay in this pore for 1-2 months feeding on pus and dead cells and reaching lengths of over an inch. Grubs will then exit from the warble and drop to the ground where it will pupate into a mature fly. The mature fly will emerge in the spring, live for 3-5 days, and will mate and lay eggs to complete the lifecycle.

As you can imagine cattle grubs cause serious health issues and cause economic damage to cattle. Health issues can include increase chance of secondary infection of warbles and low immunity. If Cattle are treated with an insecticide while the grub is migrating through the body death or paralysis is possible. In 1948, a third of all cattle hides in the US contained 5 or more warble holes and were sold at a discounted price. Meat quality in the back region will also be degraded.

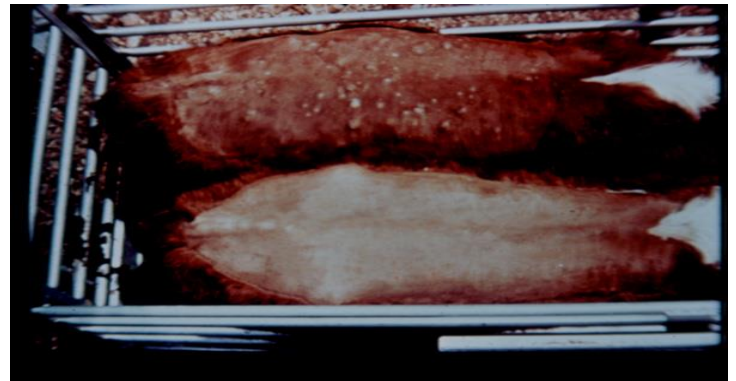
If you suspect you have cattle infected with cattle grubs, contact the extension office. Extension across the state is now monitoring for cattle grubs to better understand the current increase of cases and to determine where and when cattle grubs are being found. This will help with providing adequate control information.



Cattle Grub Life Cycle. Image Credit E. N. I. Weeks, University of Florida



Cattle Grub mature larva leaving host.
Image Credit: C.L. Hoelscher.



Cattle Grub Infestation. Many warbles are apparent along the backline of the top animal.
Image Credit: P. Scholl, USDA/Ag, Canada

East Texas Natural Resources Tours

Come join us on free tours of professionally managed sites across east Texas. Guided tours by professionals will allow participants a chance to gain in field knowledge of managing habitats, wildlife, and fisheries resources of east Texas. All tours will depart from the extension office in Livingston at 8:00, but transportation and lunch will not be provided. Tour Schedule: July 7, fisheries management, waterfowl management. RSVP required July 7: [Click Here](#) You can also RSVP by calling the Polk County extension office.

Polk County Produce Growers Breakfast Meeting, Last Friday of Odd Numbered Months

Join us for a fellowship of local growers and garden enthusiasts. Meetings allow participants a chance to gain knowledge and skills from vegetable and fruit specialists while also getting to know other growers in the county. Free donuts and coffee courtesy of Polk County Farm Bureau. Meetings occur the last Friday of odd numbered months at 8:00 am. Location is Farm Bureau Office in Livingston. If you will be a first-time attendee, please RSVP by calling the Polk County Extension office.

July 28: Insect Control

September 29: Rainwater Harvesting

November 16: Understanding Food Labels

Beef Cattle Short Course

69th annual Beef Cattle Short Course will take place in College Station from August 7-9. This is by far the best beef cattle education program extension hosts. For more information visit beefcattleshortcourse.com or 979-845-6931

Beef and Forage Workshop

A Beef and Forage Workshop will take place on August 25 at the Groveton Community Center. Topics will be forage management, weed ID, cattle nutrition, and pond management. CEU will be offered for TDA applicator license holders. Final details of the program are being finalized. For more details and to register call the extension office.

Polk County AgriLife Extension YouTube Channel

Make sure to check out your county extension YouTube Channel to catch up on videos. Videos answer many questions the extension office consistently receives and provides valuable education. For spring 2023 a short weekly video highlights the wildflower of the week.

East Texas Wildlife Expo

This is an exciting new multi county wildlife program that will hopefully become an annual event to promote wildlife and land management in East Texas. The expo is scheduled for October 6 and will be in Jasper. Will include classroom presentations and in the field presentations. Look for more information later this summer.

Dead Wood For Wildlife

Have you ever giving much thought to the value of a tree after it has died or fallen to the forest floor? It is easy to recognize the value of a tree when it is alive from providing food for wildlife to filtering air and providing oxygen. However, once a tree is dead, rather it is standing (snags) or has fallen (logs) the tree still provides numerous benefits to the forest ecosystem. The benefits of dead trees are too numerous to list in this short article, but they range from providing nesting cavities, food sources, shelter, habitat for hibernation, to insect population suppression.

Some east Texas birds that utilize dead tree cavities include wood duck, barn owl, barred owl, northern flicker, pileated woodpecker, Carolina chickadee, eastern bluebird, tufted titmouse, and turkey vulture to name a few. Cavities are just not for birds as they are important for mammals like opossum, bats, squirrels, deer mouse, white footed mouse, black bear, raccoon, and long tailed weasel.

Many reptiles and salamanders utilize rotting wood for a variety of purposes. Not only do logs provide shelter they also make great hunting grounds for prey that are utilizing the logs for shelter also. Many salamanders require the moist decaying wood found in logs to meet specific habitat requirements.

Mushrooms are an important food source for forest animals and can be found in abundance on dead wood. Mushrooms are food for insects, turtles, birds, mice, squirrels, and deer. Deer have also been known to utilize nutritious mushrooms to compensate for nutritional deficiencies.

Nesting cavities in snags provide a home for many insect eating birds. It is believed that managing for cavities is important for supporting insect eating bird populations. Thus, allowing for suppression of costly forest pest in a managed forest.

So make sure you leave some dead wood for wildlife!

Management Tips

- Avoid working your cattle during the heat of the day to prevent heat stress. Early morning or late evening is ideal time.
- Conduct deer spotlight surveys during July and August to determine harvest recommendations.
- Bermuda grass stem maggot becomes most active starting in July. Scout fields for signs of damage.
- Will you be liming a fishpond? If so, avoid using hydrated or slacked lime as these products quickly change water pH and have a high probability of killing any fish in the pond.
- Leave dead snags in the forest to promote habitat for a variety of wildlife dependent on dead wood.

Texas A&M Agrilife Extension provides equal opportunities in its programs and employment to all persons, regardless of race, color, sex, religion, national origin, disability, age, genetic information, veteran status, sexual orientation, or gender identity. The Texas A&M University System, U. S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating. Anyone needing special assistance at an Extension Program should contact the Texas Agrilife Extension Office at (936) 327-6828 at least one week prior to the program or event.