Horn Fly

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Haematobia irritans L.

Origin
May have entered Hawaii with the first cattle in 1793. First reported from Kaneohe Ranch in 1898.

Public health concern
Bites people when dislocated from its host.

Hosts
Feed on cattle but may also feed on horses, sheep, and goats.

Livestock concern
Causes weight and blood loss to animals, and bites may lead to secondary infections.

Description
Small, gray fly about 3⁄16 inches long. A black proboscis projects forward from the bottom of the head. They cluster on cattle’s back, shoulders, sides, and belly. Identified by their head-downward position on cattle.

Life cycle
Growth stages: egg, larva, pupa, adult. From egg to adult takes two weeks. Eggs are laid in fresh cow manure. Larvae and pupae develop in fresh cow manure, and adult flies emerge from the manure piles.

Control
Dairies need to clear milking stalls of fresh manure daily. Flies on animals need to be controlled through the use of back rubbers, dust bags, impregnated ear tags, pour-ons, or sprays. Consult your pesticide supplier for recommended products, and always follow label directions.

References