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August 2018 Newsletter

The FLIES!!!

It never fails that around this time of year, those pesky insects get the better of humans and horses. As horses are driven crazy by the flies, owners are driven to distraction trying to help them. By the end of summer, everyone is frustrated because NOTHING seems to work. However, recently, the University of Minnesota published a study testing a few of the different forms of fly protection for horses. This is what they found:

Fly sprays containing permethrins or pyrethrins (most of your common, expensive, store bought brands) were ineffective in reducing fly annoyance behaviors (stomping, swishing, twitching, biting, etc...). Now some of this may be due to the concentration of the fly spray and how much is applied to the body, as permethrins and pyrethrins are dose dependent in their ability to kill flies.

Fly sprays containing citronella, a natural ingredient extracted from lemon grass, reduced all of the fly annoyance behaviors when applied to the whole body.

Leg bands and leggings (the mesh style) both reduced the amount of fly annoyance behaviors, even while using different methods of repelling. The leg bands are usually infused with citronella, which would chemically repel the flies, and the leggings provide a physical barrier to the flies.

While no fly control proved to completely eliminate the fly annoyance behaviors, it's helpful to know that citronella sprays are the most effective in reducing the behaviors associated with flies, and leg bands and leggings are helpful as well. Other ways to help with fly control include fly masks, fly sheets (be careful in the summer), and fly traps.

For those of you who wish to read more on the whole study, here is a link to the article:
<https://www.sciencedirect.com/science/article/pii/S0737080618301291>

Don't forget, we're looking at a HOT, DRY summer, which means hay is going to be in short supply this year. Be sure to plan ahead and buy what you need so you aren't scrambling at the end of winter trying to find hay!