

Controlling plague locusts in dairying areas

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Introduction

This Primefact outlines the precautions to be taken when applying insecticides in dairying areas and management strategies that should be considered.

Check the insecticide information

All insecticides that are used to spray for locusts should be checked for the following information.

Grazing/fodder withholding period (WHP)

This is the time that must elapse between spraying the pasture/crop and when the cows can graze that feed or when the pasture/crop can be cut for hay or silage. The grazing/fodder withholding period is shown on the insecticide label.

Under the *Rural Lands Protection Act 1998*, landholders are required to report the presence of plague locusts on their land to their local Livestock Health and Pest Authority (LHPA). They are also required to use insecticide to control locust nymphs when the nymphs band together. Insecticide is provided free of charge to ratepayers from local LHPAs.

All pesticide users must comply with the laws governing the use of insecticides. The *Pesticides Act 1999* requires that all pesticide applications be recorded and that these records be in English and kept for three years. All pesticide applicators must hold a current training qualification as specified by the Pesticides Regulation 1995 under the Pesticides Act. Only use insecticides that are registered for locust control or whose use for this purpose is allowed under a permit issued by the Australian Pesticides and Veterinary Medicines Authority (APVMA). Each time a pesticide is used, the Pesticides Act requires that all of the label (or permit) be read or explained and that all label/permit instructions be followed.

Export slaughter interval (ESI)

This is the period of time that cattle must be kept on clean pasture or feed, before entry to the milking herd, or slaughter for export, if they have been oversprayed (aerially sprayed) with the insecticide or if they have eaten treated feed before the grazing/fodder withholding period has expired.

Export grazing interval (EGI)

Livestock that have been oversprayed or which eat treated feeds before the grazing/fodder withholding period for the insecticide has expired must not enter the milking herd, or be slaughtered for human consumption, until the EGI has expired, unless they have been kept on clean pasture or feed for the duration of the ESI for that insecticide.

Make a note of these intervals because they will be important for minimising the risk of insecticides contaminating meat or milk.

The biological control agent *Metarhizium* may be available for use in environmentally sensitive areas such as organic farms and areas of threatened species.

Note: The APVMA has issued permits to allow the use of certain synthetic pyrethroid sprays for locust control. All of the requirements set out in these permits must be observed. In the case of stock intended for export slaughter, these permits confirm the need to observe the relevant ESI or EGI, even if the grazing/fodder WHP has been met before the treated feed was first grazed or fed.

Further information on residues can be found in the Safemeat brochure (see 'Further information').

Manage the milking herd accordingly

Do not allow any cattle access to any sprayed pasture or crop until the grazing/fodder WHP for the insecticide used has expired. For example: if the grazing/fodder WHP is 28 days, then wait *at least 28 days* after spraying before:

- allowing cattle back into the paddock;
- conserving feed off the paddock; or
- cutting and carrying feed from that paddock to feed to cattle.



The insecticide sprayed on the pasture or crop will be broken down during the grazing/fodder WHP. Hay or silage made from the pasture or crop may retain the insecticide for long periods, so do not bale or ensile the pasture or crop before the grazing/fodder WHP has expired.

If paddock feed is limited because these pastures and crops have been excluded from the normal rotation, then feed the cows on a feed pad, loafing pad, laneway or sacrifice paddock. Obtain advice from your adviser or consultant on what to feed.

If a cow manages to enter a sprayed paddock or is accidentally oversprayed, then she should either:

- be fed on clean pasture or a clean feed source for the duration of the ESI; or
- meet the EGI for the insecticide before her milk enters the vat or is used for feeding calves.

If dry cows graze a sprayed paddock before the grazing/fodder WHP has expired, or if they are oversprayed, then they must not enter the milking herd until they have met either:

- the ESI on clean feed; or
- the EGI for the insecticide.

Plan ahead for the feeding of your stock

If there is a risk that a feed shortage could occur, plan now to:

- conserve feed (prior to spraying) that may otherwise not be able to be fed to the cows; or
- use previously ensiled fodder to cover the grazing/fodder WHP; or
- buy sufficient forage to cover the grazing/fodder WHP.

Discuss how much feed you will require with your adviser or consultant.

Organise a suitable feeding area if one doesn't already exist. This may be a sacrifice paddock, laneway or yard. The area should not be adjacent to a watercourse or in an area where manure and effluent can reach a watercourse if it rains. Ensure the cows have access to drinking water and shade.

Contact your local Livestock Health and Pest Authority to find out which insecticides they are likely to use, so that you can plan ahead – remember, different insecticides have different WHPs and EGIs.

Personal protective equipment and OHS requirements

Ensure that you follow all label directions on the use of personal protective equipment and any other

occupational health and safety requirements. Alternatively, consider using a contract sprayer who is already equipped to meet these occupational health and safety requirements.

Further information

Information on plague locusts and managing pesticides is available from:

- Industry & Investment NSW (Formerly NSW DPI) www.dpi.nsw.gov.au
- Livestock Health and Pest Authorities www.lhpa.org.au
- Australian Plague Locust Commission <http://www.daff.gov.au/animal-plant-health/locusts>
- NSW Department of Environment and Climate Change <http://www.environment.nsw.gov.au/pesticides/index.htm>
- Australian Pesticides & Veterinary Medicines Authority <http://www.apvma.gov.au/index.asp>
- Safemeat brochure <http://www.safemeat.com.au/English/Safemeat+Publications>

Contact Industry & Investment NSW Dairy Officers for information on:

- feeding a total ration to dairy herds
- planning to conserve feed before spraying
- loafing areas for dairy cattle
- effluent management on feed pads
- water requirements for lactating dairy cattle.

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Disclaimer: The information contained in this publication is based on knowledge and understanding at the time of writing (August 2009). However, because of advances in knowledge, users are reminded of the need to ensure that information upon which they rely is up to date and to check currency of the information with the appropriate officer of Industry & Investment NSW or the user's independent adviser.

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