

Five-County Survey, Fluke Information

Prevalence

Thirty-four percent of the 231 producers responding to the question, "do you have flukes on your property?" answered "yes". Twenty-four percent said "no", and 42 percent indicated they did not know (Table 4). The highest proportion of the "yes" answers (85 percent) was in Hendry county while the lowest proportion (23 percent) was in Osceola county.

Another way to evaluate the estimates of prevalence is according to responses by size of ranch. Table 5 shows that nearly two-thirds of the small producers (61 percent) i.e. those with less than 50 head, did not know if they had flukes, while that estimate was 44 percent for all producers. Thirty-four percent of all respondents believed they had flukes, while the estimate was just 13 percent for the smaller ones.

Cost of Flukes

All survey respondents (231) replied to the question about cost of flukes. Thirty percent believed them to be costly, 49 percent said "no", and 21 percent replied they did not know (Table 6). Hendry county had the greatest proportion of fluke-infested ranches among all five counties surveyed. It also had the greatest response to flukes being costly. However, this response is somewhat confounded by the greater prevalence of large ranches in this county.

Among the respondents who replied "yes, they did have flukes", there was almost the same proportion of replies to "yes, flukes are costly", among both small producers and all respondents (78 and 77 percent respectively) (Table 7). The response was exactly the same (89 percent) among small and all producers who replied "no, they did not have flukes", and "no, they are not costly."

Number of Fluke Treatments Annually

Fifty-six percent of the 231 producers responding said they do not treat for flukes, 31 percent treat once a year, 11 percent treat twice annually, and 2 percent three times. Only one producer of the 231 respondents indicated treatment four times annually (Table 8). Hendry county producers not only perceived flukes to be costly, but also treated to a much greater extent than in other counties.

Treatments have been broken down in Table 9 according to estimates of fluke prevalence. Sixty-seven percent of small producers who estimated they have flukes treated once as opposed to 61 percent of all respondents. Among those who didn't know if they

have flukes, 75 percent of all small producers didn't treat at all, which was about the same (80 percent) for all producers.

Fluke Treatment Seasons

There was a wide variety of treatment times according to the survey results. However, forty-two percent of the 106 producers responding stated they only treated in the spring (January-June) while 31 percent treated only in the fall (Table 10). Sixteen percent treated in both the spring and fall. Four percent treated all year while two percent treated in the spring and summer, and another two percent treated in the summer and fall. Three percent treated in the summer only. Overall, 49 percent treated at least once in the fall, which is considered by University of Florida veterinarians the optimal treatment season.

Liver Fluke Treatment Conditions

There were a total of 110 respondents to the question about conditions under which cattle were treated for flukes. Fifty-seven percent of ranchers indicated they treated for flukes when they treated for other parasites, 34 percent when cattle were worked for other reasons, and 9 percent by special roundup (Table 11).

Seventy-five percent of small producers indicated they treated when cattle were treated for other parasites, compared with 57 percent for all respondents (Table 12). About one-third of all respondents treated when cattle were worked for other reasons as opposed to 11 percent of small producers.

Fluke Treatment Dose

Eighty-nine percent of the 99 respondents indicated they treated their cattle according to label instructions. Ten percent used a little more than the recommended dose while one percent used a little less than the label instructions. There was no significant difference between counties.

Kaplan Slaughter Plant Survey

An agreement was reached with Kaplan Industries, Inc. for their slaughter plant at Bartow, Florida, to maintain records on all livers inspected on mature cattle slaughtered from August 15, 1984, through December 31, 1984. There were a total of 432 lots of cattle comprising 25,238 head. Of those, 16,207 head or 64 percent had livers condemned due to flukes (Table 13). There were 9 percent which had livers condemned for other reasons, making a 73 percent total condemnation rate.