CONTROL OF PARALYSIS TICK WITH PYTHON INSECTICIDAL CATTLE EAR TAGS

1. The paralysis tick, *Ixodes holocyclus*, is a three-host tick native to Australia with a wide marsupial host range. The main hosts are bandicoots but it has been recorded on possums, echidnas, rats, domestic animals, livestock, birds and humans. Paralysis tick is found on the east cost of Australia, from Northern Queensland to Victoria. In Queensland, it occurs in rainforest areas inland to the Bunya Mountains while in New South Wales and Victoria it rarely occurred more than 16km inland from the coast, although it has spread further inland in recent years. It does occur in Tasmania.

2. The life cycle occupies from 240 to 740 days, one year in the tropics and two years in temperate areas of Australia. Eggs hatch after 50 to 60 days with larvae becoming active after a week and attach to a host. They feed for 4 to 6 days, drop off, moult in 19 to 41 days and become nymphs. After a week, the nymphs attach to another host engorge over a 4 to 7 day period and then drop off. Adults develop from the nymphs in 3 to 10 weeks, the females attach to the third and final host and feed for 6 to 21 days after which they drop off and lay up to 3,000 eggs. Males do not attach but wander over the host's body searching for females. Females can live for 2 to 3 months before feeding. The highest populations of Paralysis Tick generally occur in spring during the months of August to October.

3. The principal symptom resulting from paralysis tick infestation is an ascending motor paralysis due to secretion of neurotoxins by the engorging female ticks. These toxins are produced in the salivary glands and passed into the host animal during feeding. Symptoms include loss of appetite, eye discharge, dilated pupils which progresses to difficulty of movement, eventual paralysis and sometimes death in newborn calves. One tick can cause paralysis. Sheep, dogs and cats are particularly susceptible but fatal cases have also been recorded in young calves and foals 6 to 9 days after the ticks attach.

4. Treatment – PYthon Insecticidal Cattle Ear tags have been registered by the APVMA to aid in control of Paralysis Tick on suckling beef and dairy calves

for up to 42 days after treatment. Python Insecticidal Cattle Ear Tags have been used extensively in the Northern Rivers of NSW and in South East Qld for the last 6-7 years for the strategic control of Paralysis Tick on newborn calves. Calves that are born in the months of August, September and October are systematically tagged with PYthon tags as they are born. Some beef producers also tag the dams of the calves in paddocks known to have high incidence of paralysis tick.

5. Testimonials

"I've never lost a calf when using the PYthon tags", Jim Peterson, Old Koreelah.

"We know we couldn't do without them", Trevor Young, White Swamp.

"We use PYthon on our calves every year and are very happy with the results", Stuart Hoffman, Emu Vale.

For further information contact Loveland Agri Products

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