

Lice on calves — survey shows wide infestation

ONE spin off claimed for warble treatment is that the use of systemic insecticides gives good control of cattle lice. During the last two winters a survey has been carried out by the West College to determine the level of louse infestation. Although one or two bulls were found to be heavily infested, adult cattle on most farms were either free of lice or had a slight infestation.

Farmers were however surprised to find their young animals, especially calves of about twelve weeks of age, to be heavily infested. Most of these farmers would have treated these calves had they realised they were louse infested.

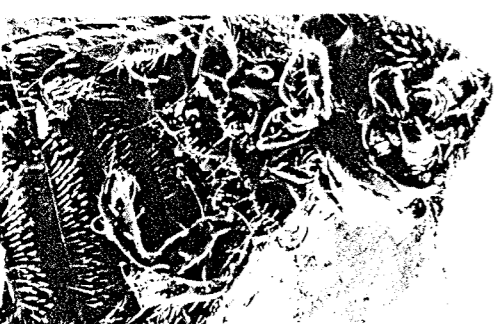
Calves were examined on a total of 100 farms. On 25 farms calves were severely louse infested, on 22 moderately infested and on 33 slightly infested. No lice were found on the remaining 20 farms. All four species of British cattle lice were found in the survey.

Calves were most commonly infested with the long-nosed cattle louse and the biting louse. The long-nosed cattle louse occurred on calves at a very early age and there was one instance of a calf of one week of age completely covered with this louse. The other two species namely the short-nosed cattle louse and *Solenopotes capillaris* were rarely seen.

Whilst cattle lice cause irritation and restlessness there are conflicting views amongst farmers and research workers concerning their effect on livestock production. Research workers in New Zealand and Australia find no difference in weight gain between louse-infested and louse-free animals.



Short-nosed cattle louse.



A biting louse.

In America however significant weight responses to louse treatment have been reported. The coat of infested animals also becomes rough and shaggy and a considerable loss of hair may occur particularly in the case of severe infestations with the long-nosed cattle louse. There is also the possibility

that the feeding activities of lice may help spread the spores of ringworm.

The improvement in appearance of animals undoubtedly justifies the small cost of treatment. Lice are most numerous in the winter so calves should be examined from November onwards and treated if found to be infested.

Following manufacturer's instructions two applications of louse powder containing HCH has given good control although on some animals a few long-nosed lice survived both treatments.

Phosmet as Poron-20 (R. Young and Co., Ltd.) gives effective control of lice. This compound can be used

throughout the winter providing the calves are at least three months old and have not been out at pasture and exposed to warble fly attack.

The new synthetic pyrethroids are also effective against lice. Cypermethrin spray (Barricade, Shell) when applied at the concentration suggested for fly control gives

complete clearance of lice. Cypermethrin when incorporated into ear tags also gives some measure of louse control.

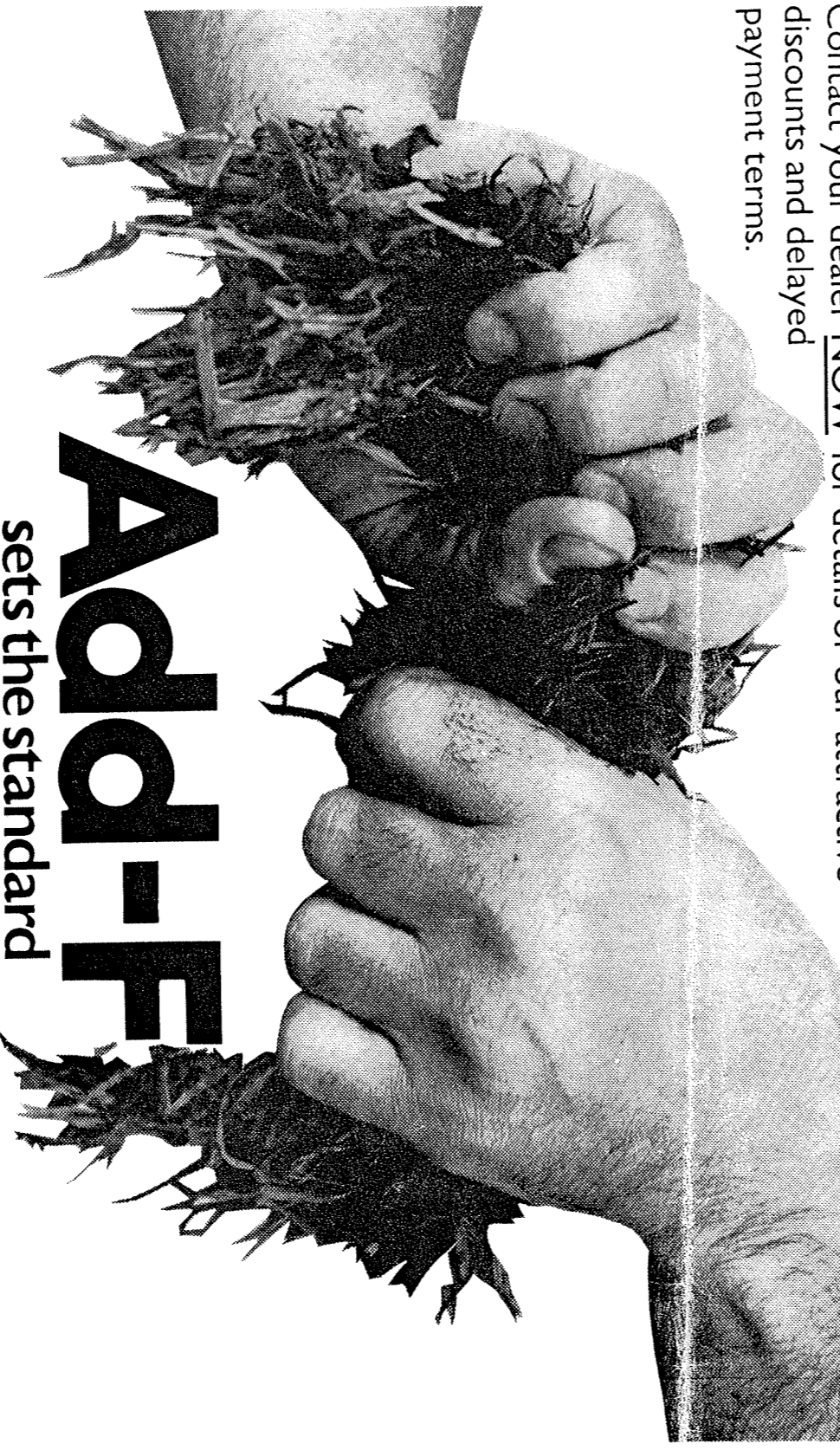
Although at present only on sale on the continent, a single application of deltamethrin (Wellcome) on the shoulders of an animal will move over the surface of the animal to give complete clearance of lice.

Other compounds can be used for lice control. Amitraz (Taktic, F.B.C.) which is particularly effective against ticks will also give control of

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BP nutrition 

LAND NATIONALISATION — A

NO BRITISH Government, not even of the extreme left of the Labour Party, would consider nationalising the land when faced with the vast cost of compensation. It would be impossible to convince any Cabinet that such expenditure should take precedence over more schools, hospitals or roads.

Mr Robert MacLennan, MP for Cairness and Sutherland (formerly a Labour MP, but now SDP), said this at the Scottish Peat and Land Development Conference, the theme for which was "Back to the land — a strategy for rural re-population."

Nationalisation was a cul-de-sac, Mr MacLennan said. A great deal of Scottish land was already owned by the Government, and he had not noticed that it was materially better-run for being in the hands of the Secretary of State.

However, there was a great deal of under-use of land in the Highlands, and he hoped that the HIBD had not lost sight of its land-use plans. "I do not think the nationalisation of land would create employment. It's a political diversion which we should eschew, but there are parts of the Highlands where it is necessary to 'shoot an Admiral to encourage the others'."

Mr Alexander Trotter, convenor of the Scottish Landowners' Federation, thought that those HIBD land-

use proposals were unnecessarily draconian. It was quite wrong to feel that it was necessary to introduce compulsory purchase and leasing to punish the 98 per cent of good landowners because of the bad two per cent.

His view was that tenancies would be made available if only landowning was treated as a business. The "crazy system" of VAT and other taxes made it necessary for a landowner,

when possible, to take his farms in hand, because he then became a businessman in the eyes of the tax authorities. "Until this is changed, there is no chance of an increase in the number of family farms for let."

Mr Trotter stressed, too, the importance of any changes in the landlord-tenant legislation being underwritten by all political parties. He maintained that the threat of land nationalisation had

already done harm to the people the Socialists said they wanted to help — the potential young tenant farmer.

Though the new legislation had not been mentioned in the Queen's speech, he still had hopes that the law would be changed to bring it in line with the proposals agreed by the SLF and the Scottish NFU.

He reiterated that the best way to increase the number of jobs on the land was to increase

the number of family-sized tenanted farms.

In a paper presented for Dr William Mutch, head of the Department of Forestry and Natural Resources at Edinburgh University, the point was made that we were not likely to see further blanket forestry in Scotland, but instead there would be a mosaic of forestry and farming.

The example was quoted of the Northern English farm where a substantial income was derived

from a small forest on the farm, worked by the farmer and his staff "between milkings".

Forests could also provide farmers with supplementary income where they were engaged part-time as contractors to carry out fencing and other maintenance. Where small round-wood could be burned locally as fuel, this would cut down the need for expensive imported energy, at the same time being possibly



Long-nosed cattle louse.

Lice on calves

(Continued from previous page) lice when used as a spray. Ivomec (Merck Sharpe and Dohme) whilst more generally used as a combined treatment has recently been used specifically for louse control on young calves. Care must be taken that animals once treated are not mixed with untreated animals and re-infested.

Only use louse preparations on those animals listed in the manufacturer's instructions. Remarkable and sometimes fatal results have followed the application of cattle preparations to cats and horses.

Whilst there is something of an epidemic of human lice there is nothing to fear from cattle lice. Although the pig louse and possibly the short-nosed cattle louse occasionally bite humans animal lice transmit no human disease and can only live on animals. They also quickly die off the host.

