

# Insecticide-Impregnated Ear Tags for Cattle



**Sonja L. Swiger,**  
 Assistant Professor and Extension Entomologist

The horn fly, *Haematobia irritans*, is one of the most prevalent insects affecting beef cattle. It is a small but persistent blood-sucking fly that feeds on cattle 30 to 40 times each day. Both male and female horn flies take blood meals, leaving the backs of cattle only for short periods when depositing egg batches into fresh manure.

Using insecticide-impregnated ear tags is an effective way to manage horn flies and there are a variety of products available.

## Ear Tag Guidelines

- Tag after 100 horn flies per animal.
- Remove at the recommended time.
- Rotate classes of insecticides (such as organophosphates, pyrethroids, or avermectin) each year; use any organophosphate for one year and then switch to any pyrethroid or other class the next year.
- Include a midseason treatment.

Pesticide Class	Brand Name	Remarks
<b>Organophosphates</b>	<b>Patriot</b> Bayer	Contains 40% diazinon as the active ingredient. Labeled to control horn flies for up to 5 months with 2 tags/animal. Also controls Gulf Coast ticks and spinose ear ticks, and helps control face flies, lice, stable flies, and house flies. Can use 1 or 2 tags/animal; 2 tags/animal gives greater control.
	<b>Warrior</b> Y-TEX	Contains 30% diazinon as the active ingredient for killing flies and 10% chlorpyrifos for lice and tick control. Labeled to control horn flies, lice, Gulf Coast ticks and spinose ear ticks for up to 5 months with 2 tags/animal. Helps control face flies, stable flies, and house flies. Can use 1 or 2 tags/animal for 3- to 4-month control and up to 5-month control, respectively. No withdrawal time required.
	<b>OPTimizer</b> Y-TEX	Contains 21% diazinon as the active ingredient. Labeled to control horn flies for up to 5 months with 2 tags/animal. Also controls lice, Gulf Coast ticks, spinose ear ticks, and helps control face flies. Use 2 tags/animal. Use during the winter to control lice. No withdrawal time required.
	<b>Dominator</b> Merck Animal Health	Contains the exclusive organophosphate chemistry 20% pirimiphos methyl as the active ingredient. Labeled to control horn flies for up to 5 months with 2 tags/animal. Helps control face flies. Can use on calves.
	<b>Corathon</b> Bayer	Contains 15% coumaphos and 35% diazinon as the active ingredients. Labeled to control horn flies, face flies, Gulf Coast ticks, and spinose ear ticks for up to 5 months with 2 tags/animal. Can use 1 tag/animal for adequate control. Approved for use on beef cattle, nonlactating dairy cattle, and calves over 3 months of age. Replaces the Co-Ral ear tag.

<b>Pyrethroids</b>	<b>PYthon</b> Y-TEX	Contains 10% zeta-cypermethrin as the active ingredient and 20% synergist. Labeled to control horn flies for up to 5 months with 2 tags/animal. Also controls face flies, Gulf Coast ticks, and spinose ear ticks. Helps control stable flies, black flies, house flies, and horse flies. Can use 1 tag/animal for 3- to 4-month control or 2 tags/animal for up to 5-month control. Use in the winter to help control lice. Can use on beef cattle, calves, and lactating cows. No withdrawal time required.
	<b>PYthon Magnum</b> Y-TEX	Contains 10% zeta-cypermethrin as the active ingredient and 20% synergist. Labeled to control horn flies for 3 to 5 months with 1 tag/animal. Also controls biting lice and helps control face flies, stable flies, house flies, and sucking lice. Use only 1 tag/animal. Larger size than PYthon and has greater effectiveness. Can use on calves over 3 months of age and on lactating cows. No withdrawal time required.
	<b>Gardstar Plus</b> Y-TEX	Contains 10% permethrin as the active ingredient. Labeled to control horn flies. Also controls face flies, Gulf Coast ticks, spinose ear ticks, and helps control lice, stable flies, and house flies. Controls pyrethroid-susceptible ectoparasites. Approved for use on baby calves. Reduces spraying and has no required withdrawal time.
	<b>CyLence Ultra</b> Bayer	Contains 8% beta-cyfluthrin as the active ingredient and 20% piperonyl butoxide. Labeled to control horn flies, face flies, Gulf Coast ticks, and spinose ear ticks for up to 5 months with 2 tags/animal. Can use 1 or 2 tags/animal; 2 tags are needed for efficient control of face flies, Gulf Coast ticks, and spinose ear ticks. Approved for use on beef and dairy cattle, including lactating cows.
	<b>Saber Extra</b> Merck Animal Health	Contains 10% lambda-cyhalothrin as the active ingredient and 13% synergist. Labeled to control horn flies for up to 5 months with 2 tags/animal. Also controls face flies. Can be used on all ages of cattle (even 1-day-old).
<b>Macrocytic Lactone</b>	<b>XP 820</b> Y-TEX	Contains 8% abamectin as the active ingredient and 20% synergist. First-ever abamectin ear tag, patent pending. Labeled for horn fly control for up to 5 months with 2 tags/animal. Also controls Gulf Coast ticks and spinose ear ticks and helps control face flies, American dog ticks, cattle fever ticks, and lone star ticks. Can use 1 tag/animal for 3-month control of horn flies. With 2 tags/animal, can get up to 5-month control of horn flies, 4-month control of Gulf Coast ticks and spinose ear ticks, 3-month control of American dog ticks, 2-month control of cattle fever ticks and lone star ticks, and fewer face flies.
<b>Combination – Organophosphate and Pyrethroid</b>	<b>Double Barrel VP</b> Merck Animal Health	Contains 6.8% lambda-cyhalothrin and 14% pirimiphos methyl as the active ingredients. Labeled to control horn flies and face flies for up to 5 months with 2 tags/animal. Approved for use on beef, nonlactating dairy cattle, and calves of all ages.

The information given herein is for educational purposes only. Reference to commercial products or trade names is made with the understanding that no discrimination is intended and no endorsement by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service is implied.

### Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

*AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu*

More Extension publications can be found at *AgriLifeBookstore.org*

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, color, sex, religion, national origin, age, disability, genetic information, or veteran status.

The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commissioners Courts of Texas Cooperating.