

New Eco-Vet fly repellent uses natural fatty acids to keep insects away.

Flies may not have much fun this summer thanks to Eco-Vet, a new weapon in the fight against these pests. Developed by veterinarians, Eco-Vet has a unique approach in which three naturally occurring fatty acids combine to repel flies and other insects before they land. It's non-toxic, fast acting and long lasting.

"Insects choose a 'victim' via a complex interaction between visual and chemical cues," explains Eco-Vet's website. "Some animals (and people) are more attractive to pests than others. In our equine friends, coat color, level of activity, carbon dioxide output and odors secreted by the horse all play a role. The normal output of chemical smells acts like a signal to the insect's guidance system to help it find and attack its potential food source."

Some fatty acids attract insects, and others repel them. Those used in Eco-Vet "make the insect unable to locate your horse as its next victim," the site continues. "It's like having a GPS system that is shouting confusing and conflicting directions at you...until you finally give up."

Eco-Vet was created Dr. Tim John, a practicing veterinarian in the Seattle area. His practice and Eco-Vet are based at the Pilchuck Veterinary Hospital campus in Snohomish, WA., where many of his fellow large and small animal vets continue to weigh on the new fly repellent.

Dr. John first looked into fly sprays when his teenage daughter began riding and he became concerned about her exposure to fly control products, the majority of which include pyrethrin or its synthetic versions. He acknowledges that there are good products using this ingredient, but also notes that the chemical is an endocrine disrupter and he was concerned about its impact on his daughter's health. He learned that the fatty acids Eco-Vet now uses had been researched extensively and patented as an insect repellent in a military context and he recognized their many benefits in the horse-keeping world.

The use of naturally occurring fatty acids instead of toxic chemicals makes Eco-Vet safe for

horses and the people putting it on them. It is approved by the Environmental Protection Agency and has no known issues with horses building up resistance to it. In addition to flies, Eco-Vet repels many types of ticks, mosquitoes and lice. Along with the annoyance factor, these pests can carry diseases so the ability to prevent them from landing on the horses is a big advantage in overall care.

Eco-Vet works when it evaporates from the skin. Each of the three fatty acids has a different evaporation rate, giving the product its range of effectiveness -- from immediate to up to three days. Application recommendations vary by the horse's condition and situation. A horse with sweet itch, for example, is hyper sensitive to midge bites and in that case a twice-daily dose is often recommended. At the other end of the spectrum is a horse that's not sweating a lot or being hosed down and does well with an application once every three days. Most horses stay fly free with an application every one or two days, Dr. John says.

Just in time for the full onslaught of the summer and early fall fly season, Eco-Vet is available online through Dover Saddlery, at select farm and tack stores and via the company's website, www.eco-vet.com. It is sold in four and 18-ounce sizes, plus a one-gallon refill container.

For more information, call 800-208-9192 or visit www.eco-vet.com.