FLEAS & LICE

Fleas
Order Siphonaptera -- fleas
General
- 2-3mm long; wingless; laterally compressed
- adapted for jumping and clinging to host
- both sexes take blood meal
- Preferred temperature 18-27°C, 60-70% relative humidity

Life cycle and epidemiology
- Ave. life cycle = 14 - 28 days
- After taking a blood meal and mating on host, the females lay eggs in the environment or on the host & eggs drop off host.
- In most species, females mate only once, possibly 500 eggs/female/lifetime.
- Eggs hatch in 2 to 12 days
- The larvae feed on organic matter and in 200 days they undergo 2 molts and form pupae.
  - Flea Frass = digested host blood deposited by adults in environment for larval food.
- The pupae hatch in 7 days to 1 year.
- The adult flea seeks a blood meal. Unfed fleas can survive for 2 months and fed fleas will live for a year.

Pathology
- Fleas are an annoyance to their host.
- Can produce anemia and death in heavy infestation.
- The saliva of fleas contains a hapten which becomes antigenic when fixed to host protein and causes dermatitis from flea bite allergy. Also most damage to self while scratching.
- Serve as intermediate host for Dipylidium caninum and Dipetalonema reconditum.
- Serve as vectors of plague (Yersinia pestis) and typhus (Rickettsia typhi)

Common species
- Ctenocephalides felis -- cat flea (most dog and cat fleas in NC are C. felis)
- Ctenocephalides canis -- dog flea
- Pulex irritant -- human flea
- Xenopsylla cheopis -- Oriental rat flea – vector for Yersinia pestis
- Echidnophaga gallinacea -- poultry or stick tight flea

FLEA CONTROL
- Integrated control program should include the host and the host’s.
- On Host: 1) adults on body and eggs in hair or feathers
- Environment: 1) eggs; 2) larvae; 3) pupae; 4) adults. Majority of flea population in the environment.
- Control: Clean up host’s environment
  - Remove material that can serve as larval flea food
  - Remove host from normal environment
  - Use chemicals to treat environment
  - Residuals or knockdown. Insect growth regulators
  - Control on host
    - (1) Dips, (2) Sprays, (3) Powders,
    - (4) Shampoos, (5) Flea collars, (6) Systemics.
Comparison of currently used flea control products:

- **Advantage® (Imidacloprid)** is applied to the coat and kills adult fleas by inhibiting postsynaptic nerve transmission. It is effective for 1 month and kills prior to biting. It is especially useful for the allergic cat or dog, in situations where one or more animals in a household roam or come into contact with other flea infested animals. Control usually dramatic.

- **Frontline® (Fipronil)** same as above with greater staying power on coat. Stands up well to repeat washing. Grooming activity of cats may make it necessary to shorten time between doses to three weeks for Frontline and Advantage in the case of the allergic animal.

- **Program® (Lufenuron)** is a chitin synthesis inhibitor that lacks adulticidal activity and controls by preventing egg hatching and larval development. It is useful for the control of fleas in a totally confined situation.

- **Revolution® (Selamectin)** topical to control heartworm, fleas, other ecto- and endoparasites.

- **K9 Advantix®** - Imidacloprid complements the activity of permethrin. Each affects parasite nerve cells at different sites. Fleas, ticks, mosquitos. **Because it contains permethrin it is highly toxic for cats. Avoid using this produce in combination dog/cat households where cats groom dogs. Treated dog should avoid close contact with cats for 24 hr post application.**

- **Bravecto®** - (Fluralaner) inhibits arthropod nervous system by antagonism of ligand-gated chloride channels including GABA and glutamate receptors. Topical application every 2-3 months.
Lice
Order Mallophaga – chewing lice

Morphology
- 1-3mm; flattened dorsoventrally; head is nearly as broad as body and rounded in front.
- Chewing mouth parts with large mandibles feed on fur, feathers and epidermal debris and some may feed on blood.
- Head is usually as broad or broader than the thorax.

Life cycle and epidemiology
- Eggs cemented to hair or feathers as “nits”, hatch in 8 to 18 days.
- Hatch and go through a series of nymphal stages to adults in about 18 days.
- Transmitted by close contact or grooming tools or tack.

Pathology
- Chief effects are due to irritation.
- Bite or scratch infested areas causing fur, wool or feather damage.
- Affected animals are restless, do not feed well.
- Egg and milk production will decline.
- Decreased feed conversion.
- Examples include Trichodectes, Felicola, Damalinia

Control
- For dog and cat carbaryl and dioxanthion shampoo
- Beef and non-lactating cattle various insecticides (sprays, dips, pour-ons)

Order Anoplura - sucking lice

Morphology
- 1-3mm; flattened dorsoventrally; head is nearly as broad as body and rounded in front.
- Piercing, blood-sucking mouth parts; head is narrow, less than body width
- Feed entirely on blood.
- Head is narrow - thorax wider than head.

Life cycle and epidemiology
- Transmitted by close contact or grooming tools or tack.
- Usually more common in winter than summer due to crowded barn, longer coat and poor condition of host.

Pathology
- Wool may be stained by larval feces.
- Heavy lice infestation may cause anemia and death.
- Foot louse of sheep can cause lameness.
- Examples include Lignonanthus, Haematopinus, Lignonanthus, Solenopotes.

Control
- For dog and cat carbaryl and dioxanthion shampoo
- Beef and non-lactating cattle -- various insecticides (sprays, dips, pour-ons)
- Also systemic drugs can be used for Anopluran lice.(ex. sc ivermectin 0.2mg/kg)