

**Weekly Ag Report**  
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December 19, 2012

Hello this is Craig Hemphill with this week's Agricultural Report.

Of necessity, Lassen County cattle grow a thick coat of hair to survive cold winter days. Long hair helps keep cattle warm, but also provides an ideal environment for annoying external parasites such as lice. Lice infestations are more than a simple annoyance. Blood sucking, biting and chewing lice are common in Northern California cattle.

Lice-infested cattle may be detected because they exhibit excessive scratching and rubbing. This behavior is especially noticeable on cool, sunny days when cattle are not eating. The scratching is really hard on barb wire fences, as they tend to stretch the fence out.

Lice are host specific and spend their entire lives on host animals. Lice are transmitted from one animal to another by contact. Suckling calves become infested while nursing lice-infected cows. As such, beef cattle should be treated prior to calving.

The life cycle for all lice is similar. Eggs (nits) are deposited on the hairs of cattle and hatch into immature lice. The immature lice have the same sucking or chewing feeding habits as adult lice. During cold weather, the life cycle from eggs to adults is about 3 to 4 weeks.

Treated cattle need to be re-examined after about 14 days, regardless of the treatment method used. Sometimes a second treatment is necessary because most insecticides are not effective against eggs. As such, lice hatched after the initial treatment may re-infest the animal.

On the ag calendar- Beef Improvement and Low Stress Animal Handling workshop at UC DAVIS Jan 12<sup>th</sup>.

Beef Quality Assurance program to be held Feb 22<sup>nd</sup> at Lassen College.