Livestock Recommendations for the

Asian Longhorned Tick (Haemaphysalis longicornis)



The Asian longhorned tick (Haemaphysalis longicornis) is an invasive pest that was first found in west central Illinois in April 2024. These small ticks can be found on people, pets, livestock, and wildlife and bites from these ticks can make people and animals ill. It is a pest of concern for livestock because severe infestations can be fatal. Learn more at go.illinois.edu/AsianLonghornedTick.

Identification

Asian longhorned ticks are light brown and very small, often smaller than a sesame seed. They are difficult to detect because they are so small. The adult female is only about the size of a pea when it is full of blood and fully engorged.

Environment

Asian longhorned ticks favor low-lying swampy areas, wooded areas, and taller grasses. Large numbers of ticks can be found in areas with established populations where these areas converge.

Species Impacted

So far Asian longhorned ticks have been found on numerous domesticated and wildlife species hosts including sheep, goats, dogs, cats, horses, cattle, chickens, squirrels, foxes, groundhogs, skunks, whitetailed deer, opossums, raccoons, mice, Canada geese, owls, hawks, and blue jays (USDA, 2024).

Livestock

All stages of the life cycle of the tick can be present on a single animal at a given time. Ticks can be found on ears, brisket, udder, tail head/vulva areas, folds of skin. Not all animals will be infested.

Prevention

Asian longhorned ticks appear to be susceptible to most of the chemical products commonly used to treat other ticks on cattle. If cattle continue to graze pastures that are heavily infested, they may become reinfected as drug levels provided by treatment drop off. The length of time that any of these products will keep cattle from becoming reinfected



Credit: Jim OCCI, Rutgers Center for Vector Biology



is not currently known but will likely vary based on the product and the number of ticks in the pasture. Consult your herd veterinarian to develop a plan for ectoparasite prevention.

Mow Pastures

Mowing pastures will help keep tick numbers lower than not mowing. Preliminary data suggests the combination of mowing and chemical products can lessen tick burden on livestock.

Wooded Areas

If Asian longhorned ticks are found in wooded areas, livestock should not roam the area until late fall when temperatures have fallen and ticks become inactive.

University of Illinois Extension Asian Longhorned Ticks

How to Collect and Submit Ticks

Illinois Extension researchers are working to survey the area where Asian longhorned ticks were first identified to help prevent further spread. Residents in Morgan County and the west central Illinois area are encouraged to collect and submit ticks by mail or to their local county Extension office.

Tick Removal

- **Pets and livestock:** Pull ticks gently and place them in a collection container.
- Human skin: Use a tweezer to grasp the tick as close to the skin as possible. Then apply gentle pulling pressure. After removing the tick, wash your hands with soap and water and the site of the tick attachment with isopropyl alcohol.

Containers, Labeling, and Storage

A variety of containers that seal can be used to store collected ticks such as a sealed plastic bag, an empty condiment jar, or a pill bottle. The ticks should be placed in isopropyl or rubbing alcohol in the container. Containers with alcohol can be left on the counter out of sunlight. If not using alcohol, place the container in the freezer until submission.

Label each container with the date and location of collection. If the ticks are removed from pets, please indicate whether the pets are treated with flea/tick products and the product name. Note if travel out of state had occurred in the previous three weeks and destination(s).

In situations where there are many small ticks called nymphs, sometimes referred to as turkey mites, use a lint roller to remove the ticks from clothing. Remove the sheet and place it on a flat surface with the sticky side up. Pull off another sheet and put the smooth side down on the first sheet. Do not put both sticky sides together. Then pull off a third sheet and lay the sticky side against the sticky side of the second sheet. Place the sheets in a sealable bag and



Use a lint roller to collect many small ticks. Credit: Risa Pesapane, Ohio State University

label them appropriately. Do not collect ticks with packing or transparent tape.

How to Submit Ticks

Take containers of ticks with rubbing alcohol to your local Illinois Extension office. Find locations at go.illinois.edu/ExtensionOffice. Offices will have a submission form that can be filled out to provide information to researchers. If you want to know the tick species you submitted, please provide contact information.

Send ticks in sealable plastic bags without alcohol to: Teresa Steckler, 354 State HWY 145 N, Simpson, IL 62985.

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References

USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service, Pest Alert Asian Longhorned Tick, www.aphis.usda.gov/sites/default/files/alert-asianlonghorned-tick.508.pdf

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Learn more about ticks

extension.illinois.edu/Ticks