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EC1549 External Parasites of Chickens and DDT

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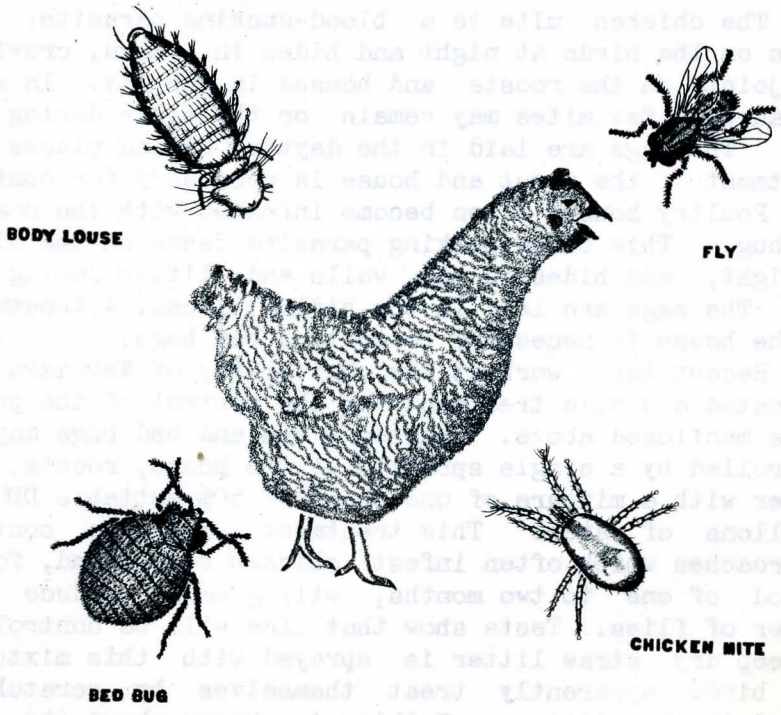
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External Parasites of Chickens and DDT



Cooperative Extension Work in Agriculture and Home Economics
University of Nebraska College of Agriculture, and the United States
Department of Agriculture cooperating, W. H. Brokaw, Director, Lincoln.

EXTERNAL PARASITES OF CHICKENS AND DDT

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External parasites are one of the most important limiting factors in the poultry industry. Several different parasites affect chickens in Nebraska. Among the most important are the body louse¹, shaft louse², chicken mite³, and bed bug⁴.

All poultry lice are biting lice that feed on the scales, feathers, hair and skin. They spend their entire lives on the birds and live only a short time if removed. The eggs or nits are glued to the feathers or down. Direct or indirect treatment of the birds is necessary to control lice.

The chicken mite is a blood-sucking parasite. It feeds on the birds at night and hides in cracks, crevices and joints on the roosts and houses in the day. In some instances a few mites may remain on the birds during the day. The eggs are laid in the daytime hiding places. A treatment of the roost and house is necessary for control.

Poultry houses often become infested with the common bed bug. This blood-sucking parasite feeds on the birds at night, and hides in the walls and litter during the day. The eggs are laid in the hiding places. A treatment of the house is necessary to control bed bugs.

Recent test work at the University of Nebraska has indicated a simple treatment for the control of the parasites mentioned above. Chicken mites and bed bugs may be controlled by a single spraying of the house, roosts, and litter with a mixture of one pound of 50% wettable DDT in 3 gallons of water. This treatment will also control cockroaches which often infest chicken houses and, for a period of one to two months, will greatly reduce the number of flies. Tests show that lice will be controlled if deep dry straw litter is sprayed with this mixture. The birds apparently treat themselves by scratching around in the litter. Nothing is known about the effectiveness of this treatment on sphagnum moss, ground cob, shavings, or diatomaceous earth litters. Birds may, however, be sprayed directly for the control of lice. No injury should result from the spraying.

¹*Fomenacanthus stramineus* (Nitz.)

²*Menopon gallinae* (L.)

³*Dermanyssus gallinae* (Deg.)

⁴*Cimex lectularius* (L.)