

Myiasis

R. Tucker

Myiasis occurs in both domesticated and free living animals. Any condition which causes softening and maceration of epidermis predisposes to it, such as prolonged periods spent in the mud, wet vegetable matters or the retention of water in the coat, Sheep, for instance, are liable to this condition during prolonged rains. Also lacerations allow the flies to lay eggs in the skin. The myiasis develops with the appearance of maggots which destroy the epidermis and dermis and penetrate into the deeper muscles and tissues. In domesticated animals the infestation by flies is usually spotted relatively early while the removal of maggots and the subsequent treatment of the wound is rather easy, Therefore the full sequence of the disease is rarely observed. However the untreated myiasis can have serious consequences as seen in wild animals as they usually come to notice in advanced stage of this disease. In East Africa a frequent sufferer from myiasis is the hedgehog. Its habit of hiding and sleeping during the day under wet foliage combined with the abundance of flies may contribute to this; most common site of affliction is the face, external ear and the neck. Six hedgehogs affected with myiasis were collected in Kiambu district - Kenya. All cases were severe and all these animals, in spite of treatment, died.