



Wildlife Services New York Fact Sheet

Managing Starling Conflicts at Dairies in New York

European starlings often congregate on dairies during winter in New York and cause damage by consuming and contaminating feed and potentially transmitting harmful diseases to livestock. USDA- Wildlife Services has developed a program to reduce the damage caused by starlings at dairies.



If requested, Wildlife Services can visit the producer's operation to make a number of recommendations that can be used by the producer to reduce damage caused by the starlings. In addition, Wildlife Services can use the toxicant DRC-1339 (which is registered for use in these situations) to expediently reduce the number of starlings on the farm. Starlings that consume it begin to show signs of lethargy in about 6 to 8 hours and die within 24 hours. By that time, virtually all of the toxicant in their body has been metabolized and excreted, effectively eliminating the possibility of secondary poisoning. Therefore, there are no hazards to pets or other wildlife.

The process entails making attractive bait available to the starlings for several days to establish a feeding pattern. This practice is called "pre-baiting" and generally takes 3 to 10 days. The pre-bait is placed in or near barns where the starlings are accustomed to feeding such as an alley between the feed bunks. After the starlings are consistently feeding on the pre-bait, a limited amount of bait that has been treated with DRC-1339 is placed in the same location. Wildlife Services will provide the producer with necessary pre-bait, apply the DRC-1339 treated bait, and be on-site to monitor the treated bait to ensure that no non-target birds are affected. The treated bait will be removed at the end of the day. There are several hours between the time the toxicant is consumed and when the starlings die, it is likely that many of the starlings will die off-site. The producer must advise their neighbors of the starling damage management program and pick up dead starlings. The dead starlings pose no hazard to people or pets because the toxicant has been metabolized and excreted prior to death of the starlings.

The key to a successful control project is to establish good pre-bait acceptance. To minimize project costs, it is the producer's responsibility to pre-bait the starlings. Where satisfactory pre-bait acceptance has been established, reductions of 75% to 95% of the starlings have been achieved in most cases. The program fee is \$700 to cover the costs associated with prebait, bait, salary and vehicle use.

If you have any questions regarding this program please contact us at 518-477-4837 (Castleton), 315-698-0940 (Brewerton) or 315-267-2288 (Potsdam).