

Ecovet Fly Spray Is Strong

This fly repellent worked like no other product we have ever used.

By Grant Miller, DVM
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Ecovet is definitely different. Sometimes it seems that flies treat fly spray like perfume. It doesn't faze them at all. If the flies are laughing at you, you probably want to pull out a bigger gun. Well, we recently found that gun: Ecovet. Be prepared, though, this fly spray sets aside the frills in order to get the job done.

It's Very Different

Ecovet is a completely different type of insect repellent when compared to traditional products. Its base consists of three different food-grade fatty acids mixed with silicone oil. Together, they work as a spatial repellent. What is a spatial repellent, might you ask? A spatial repellent is a substance that prevents insects from even entering the general space of the animal to which it is applied. Yes, you read that right.

The fatty acids in Ecovet evaporate from the horse's skin at different rates, and during the course of their evaporation they release a scent that interferes with the insect's directional ability. In other words, they cause flies and mosquitoes to become disoriented, and it can result in their death. The fatty acids evaporate in one to

three days, so this spray needs to be reapplied on that interval to work continually. That's of course on a horse that isn't sweating a lot, being rained on or bathed.

Several of our top field-trial barns tried this product for us. Collectively, we all agreed that it worked extremely well at repelling flies. From there, our opinions varied.

Initially, you have to prepare yourself. This product does not smell like traditional fly spray. It has a musty smell with a hint of coconut, reminding some of us of the Coppertone sunscreen that we grew up with. A few testers said the smell was overpowering at first, making them want to sneeze. It may even irritate your eyes. The smell is more obnoxious in a closed space like a barn aisle than it is in an open wash stall or breezeway, of course.

The next question was, what does the horse want? Well, we found our horses seemed to opt to be fly-free in exchange for smelling a bit odd. Note: Ecovet reports the company is working on producing more than one scent. Our bottles contained the "classic" scent, but the company was already at work on a new scent based on sage. Maybe that will help some of those with sensitive noses.

Effects

Our horses' coats became smooth and shiny when we used the spray, but amazingly it did not leave a greasy residue.

The sprayer is high quality. It puts out a perfect mist and very little of the product is wasted. It didn't clog for us, and we were able to use all of the spray without waste.

On the bottle, it says that it should not be used in intensely sweating horses, which concerned some of our testers who had sport horses in hard work. The warning is because Ecovet follows the "oil and water" rule when it comes into contact with a moist surface. As a result, if it's sprayed on a wet or sweaty horse, it may bead up and be less effective than when sprayed on a dry horse.

We noticed this effect when we sprayed it on the ground in a wet wash rack. It beaded up immediately, due to the polarity of the fatty acids in the spray. There is no harm to spraying a wet or sweaty horse, but it won't go on as evenly if it is applied to a wet horse vs. a dry one.

We're also sharing with you the questions we received from testers:

Is it toxic?

Only to insects. Fatty acids are encountered commonly in day-to-day life. They are widely used in performance products, such as Platinum and others. Silicone oil is a base component of most human skin care, hair care and cosmetic products. It merely serves as a carrier and is classified by the Environmental Protection Agency as an inert substance.

"Ecovet is definitely different."
– Horse Journal



If it has fatty acids in it, can it go rancid?

No. Some fatty acids are unsaturated (such as those found in butter and cooking oil). But the fatty acids in Ecovet are saturated, meaning that they are stabilized and unable to denature. There are no adverse consequences of keeping it in warm ambient temperatures.

Can it react with any other products that I put on my horse?

As we finish this story, Ecovet isn't known to react with any products. Theoretically, however, it could react with a substance that had a very high pH, such as bleach. That said, we shouldn't be using products with high pH on our horses anyway, because they would irritate the skin.

We believe it would be unlikely to react with any of our daily horse products. For the most part, we think it may become inactive if it did react with a basic compound but not likely harmful. That said, if you have any reason for concern, do a 24-hour spot test on your horse first, meaning, just spray a small specific area,

such as your horse's hip, then wait 24 hours to see if there's a reaction.

The veterinarian from the Ecovet company said that it has helped horses that have sweet itch problems. Some horses, he said, had reached a point that unless they were covered 24/7 they were miserable.

"Because of its mechanism of action," he said, "the midges that cause the problem didn't land on the horses so it didn't start the inflammatory response. We have reports of horses growing manes and tails that haven't had ones for years." We did not have the opportunity to try the product on sweet itch, but we know that horse owners battling it will try anything to get their horses relief, so we wanted to share this with you.

Bottom Line

Some of our testers were so turned off by the smell they said they would not use it again, despite its effectiveness. When we spoke with the manufacturer, we learned that they were aware that some people didn't like the classic scent – which is what we had – and that they are no longer making that scent. That's good news because, in overall effectiveness at repelling flies, we found it surpassed other products we've used. When our testers learned there were different scents available, they all said they would purchase Ecovet.

Ecovet literally repelled the bugs - they didn't want to be around the horse wearing Ecovet. With traditional fly sprays, the flies often land on the horse then leave quickly, before biting. It's a big complaint from a lot of horse people who don't really understand how these products work and think that, because they see flies around their horses, the spray "isn't working." That isn't the case. With most horse fly

spray products, you don't see the fly die. You see it briefly land, then fly off, quickly becoming disoriented and/or killed.

However, there are two cons to its use:

1. It is more expensive: Ecovet is \$19.99 for an 18 oz bottle, or \$1.11/oz. (You can purchase a 4 oz. sampler size for \$6.50.)

We compared that price to our top-choice fly products, which also remain Horse Journal recommended products: Absorbine UltraShield and Farnam's Mosquito Halt, both of which average around 62¢/oz. in a quart-size sprayer; Pyranha Fly Spray and Espree Aloe Herbal (our only all-natural favorite), both of which retail around 47¢/oz. in a quart-size sprayer; and Farnam Original Wipe, which is about 78¢/oz. at the 32 oz. size.

2. It is currently only sold – even via the Internet – in Oregon, Washington, Nebraska and Texas, due to the costs associated with each state's individual regulations and fees for pesticide registration. The company does plan to continue to expand their territory nationally.

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