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# the FOWL TICK

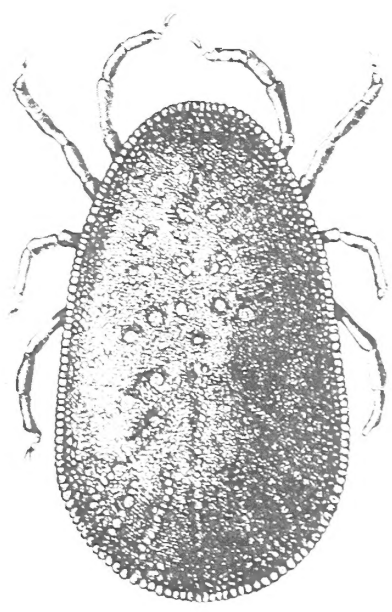
## how to control it



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# the FOWL TICK

## how to control it

The fowl tick,<sup>1</sup> also called the bluebug or chicken tick, injures poultry by sucking blood. It prefers chickens, but it also attacks other poultry, chiefly turkeys.

The fowl tick is also called the chicken tick and the bluebug.

This pest occurs mostly in Southern States, particularly where annual rainfall is light, as in the Southwest. It sometimes occurs in more humid, cooler States, to which it is carried in the shipment of infested poultry and crates.

The fowl tick can be controlled by following good sanitation practices, and by spraying with insecticides.

### NATURE OF INJURY

The blood sucking of fowl ticks causes poultry to be unthrifty, to lose weight, and to lay fewer eggs. Heavy infestations of ticks sometimes kill fowls and often cause setting hens to desert their nests.

Chickens infested with ticks show weakness in the legs, droopiness of the wings, and loss of appetite; they have pale combs and wattles.

### HOW FOWL TICKS DEVELOP

Fowl ticks lay brownish, spherical eggs in cracks and rough places

of poultry houses or roosting areas. In warm weather, the eggs hatch in about 2 weeks; in cool weather they hatch in 2 or 3 months.

When the eggs hatch, the young ticks, or larvae, attach themselves to poultry. They gather in places where feathers are sparse—under wings and on thighs and neck. They remain on the fowls about a week, sucking blood. Then they drop off at night, while the fowls are on the roost, and seek a hiding place. They are about  $\frac{1}{10}$  inch long and are blue or purplish.

After a few days the larvae molt to the next stage: They become nymphs. The nymphs also attach themselves to fowls, and feed; but they remain attached only a few minutes at a time. After each feeding they drop off and seek a hiding place. Each nymph feeds two or three times, and molts several days after each meal. After the final molt, the ticks become adults. Adults feed several times, for a few minutes each time, and females lay eggs after each meal. The female may lay up to 900 eggs in a number of batches. Adults are  $\frac{1}{2}$  to nearly  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch long.

### HOW TO DETECT THEM

Fowl ticks are not easily noticed because adults and nymphs hide during the day in cracks and crev-

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<sup>1</sup> *Argas sp.*

ices of poultry houses and come out only at night to suck blood.

Usually you don't know they are around until your flock shows marked symptoms of attack.

It is easier to look for masses of ticks in cracks and rough spots, or under loose pieces of bark or boards about the roosts, than it is to find them on fowls. You can sometimes see the larval ticks as small, dark objects attached to the skin.

Spots of black excrement where ticks are hiding is another clue to their presence.

### CONTROL METHODS

Once established in a poultry house, or in outdoor roosts, fowl ticks are difficult to control. Removal of fowls from infested areas is not a practicable way to get rid of the ticks, which can live as long as 2 years without feeding.

#### Spraying With Insecticides

Several sprays may be used against fowl ticks, but success depends on how thoroughly the materials are applied.

A spray containing 2 percent of carbaryl, or 3 percent of malathion, or 0.3 percent of naled, will control fowl ticks. Apply it to roosts and to the interior of poultry houses and coops. Pay particular attention to cracks, crevices, and rough spots where ticks may be hiding.

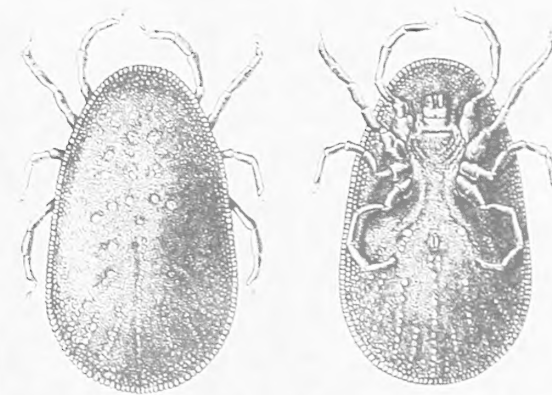
Make a spray by mixing a wettable powder or an emulsifiable concentrate with water. The accompanying table shows the amount of the purchased product to use for the mixture you want.

Thorough coverage with the spray

THE FOWL TICK: Nymph



THE FOWL TICK: Adult female



Spraying roosts to control fowl ticks



## GUIDE FOR PREPARING SPRAYS

PURCHASED PRODUCT	Amount of product to mix with 1 gallon of water	
	Wettable powder	Emulsifiable concentrate
Carbaryl, 50-percent .....	5 ounces	.....
Malathion, 50-percent .....	.....	7.5 fluid ounces
Naled, 41-percent .....	.....	0.8 fluid ounces

is essential. Repeated treatments may be necessary.

A small power sprayer is the most effective device for applying sprays. You may use a garden-type compressed-air sprayer; but if you are applying a wettable-powder spray, shake the sprayer often to keep the powder in suspension in the spray mixture.

### Sanitation and Management

Use roosts and nests of the knock-down type for easier cleaning and spraying.

Eliminate hiding places of ticks by removing loose boards and rubbish.

Do not permit fowls to roost in trees, livestock sheds, and similar unsuitable places. Provide a modern, well-ventilated poultry house and keep it clean.

The poultry house should be sprayed at least twice a year.

## PRECAUTIONS

Pesticides used improperly can be injurious to man, animals, and plants. Follow the directions and heed all precautions on the labels.

Store pesticides in original con-

tainers under lock and key—out of the reach of children and animals—and away from food and feed.

Apply pesticides so that they do not endanger humans, livestock, crops, beneficial insects, fish, and wildlife.

Avoid prolonged inhalation of pesticide sprays or dusts; wear protective clothing and equipment if specified on the container.

If your hands become contaminated with a pesticide, do not eat or drink until you have washed. In case a pesticide is swallowed or gets in the eyes, follow the first aid treatment given on the label, and get prompt medical attention. If a pesticide is spilled on your skin or clothing, remove clothing immediately and wash skin thoroughly.

Do not clean spray equipment or dump excess spray material near ponds, streams, or wells.

Dispose of empty pesticide containers promptly. Have them buried at a sanitary land-fill dump, or crush and bury them in a level, isolated place.

NOTE: Some States have restrictions on the use of certain pesticides. Check your State and local regulations. Also, because registrations of



pesticides are under constant review by the U.S. Department of Agriculture, consult your county agricul-

tural agent or State Extension specialist to be sure the intended use is still registered.

The Federal registration for the use of carbaryl, malathion, and naled in poultry houses was at the time of publication subject to cancellation on January 1, 1970. Do not use any of these insecticides for the indicated purposes after January 1, 1970, without first determining if the registration remains effective. If chemicals recommended in this leaflet are cancelled, contact county agricultural agent or State agricultural experiment station for substitute recommendations.

**Prepared by**

Entomology Research Division  
Agricultural Research Service



This edition incorporates changes in insecticide recommendations that make all previous editions obsolete. For this reason, all earlier copies should be destroyed.

Washington, D.C.

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