

# FEEDLOT MAGAZINE

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## Insectary Helps Control Feedyard Flies

By Nancy Carver Singleton

One insectary has seen "tremendous growth" since the early 1990s by installing fly control systems in feedlots and other livestock operations. According to Frank Junfin, owner of Kunafin Insectary in Quemado, Texas, more producers are using insects for fly control than they were 15 to 20 years ago, "In feedlots, we are seeing more successful control of flies using bugs."

For feedlot fly control, they use fly parasites (tiny wasps) raised in their insectary. They work by destroying fly pupae. The female wasps pierce the cocoons of the fly pupae and lay eggs. As baby wasps hatch, they eat the potentially developing flies.

The business was started by his late father, Joe, who had training in entomology while growing up in the former Soviet Union. Joe Junfin, who spoke seven languages, brought his young family to the United States in 1956. In 1959 Joe Junfin started his own insect scouting business in the winter garden area of southern Texas.

After working with the insects since age six, Frank Junfin earned a degree in entomology from Texas A & M University in 1975. He joined his father and started an insectary to supply their own beneficial insects for field crops. He named the insectary Kunafin, which is the Russian spelling of the family name.

Kunafin Insectary branched into feedlots in the late 1970s when Leon Miller, owner of Alta Verde Industries, in Eagle Pass, Texas, asked for help with fly control. "They told us one of their first comments from visitors were, 'Where are the flies?' There were flies, but nothing like you'd normally see," Junfin recalled.

Craig Clyburn was yard manager at Alta

Verde Industries then. After moving to another feed yard, he asked for assistance in starting a fly control program. Clyburn now uses Kunafin's fly parasites as operations manager for Palo Duro Feeders in Gruver, Texas, and Texas Beef Producers in Dumas, Texas.

"They are safe to use. There is no harm to cattle or people. You may not see a lot of improvement the first year, but as time goes by and you release more wasps, you will see control in a lot real fast," Clyburn said.

Junfin stressed that Kunafin is a family operation. His wife, Adele, began working with him in the mid-1980s and is co-owner of the insectary. "My transition from field consultant to feedlots was basically because of her. She was very instrumental in working with producers in the Panhandle and up north," he said.

His nephew, Clifton Castle, 21, is a supervisor of feedlot operations. The Junfin children-Beyer, 18; Blaine, 17; and Birgit, 10-work with their parents after school and in the summers.

Junfin says that feedyards should not rely completely on his wasps for total fly control. Along with fly parasites, an operation needs to put baits and traps in front of feed bunk lanes and around building parameters. He advised using residual wall spray applications around office buildings and mill areas.

Producers also need to maintain general cleanliness and practice manure management.

"A lot of people don't understand. They are looking for a magic bullet," Junfin said. Along with supplying insects, Kunafin does consulting and education programs for producers.