

Warble Fly

The warble fly is an insect, which parasitically infects cattle. Animals usually affected are Cattle although horses and deer can be affected.

Adult warble flies are hairy and about the size of small bees with yellow-orange abdomens. The fly lays eggs on the hair of cattle during summer. After about 4 days larvae hatch and migrate into the skin. The larvae move between muscle layers to either the oesophagus or the spinal canal where the larvae stay dormant during winter.

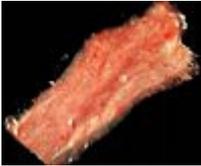
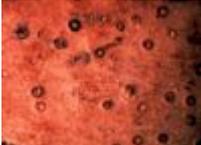
In late winter or early spring the larvae migrate to the tissue under the skin on the back where they mature for about 30 days. The larvae then drop off the host animal and pupate in soil. The fly emerges after about 36 days. There are two species of Warble Fly: *Hypoderma bovis* and *Hypoderma lineatum*.

Attacks by warble flies laying eggs can cause severe irritation. Animals may injure themselves as a result.

The larval migration is not usually noticed clinically, but heavy infestations may reduce growth and milk production. Occasionally the pressure of larvae on the spinal cord can cause paralysis.

When the larvae reach the skin on the animal's back, large, soft, painful swellings of up to 3mm diameter develop. The larvae can be removed from lesions if punctured. They can grow up to 28mm long and range in colour from white to light brown as they mature.

Damage to the hide is usually permanent and carcasses may be downgraded due to discoloration of meat along larval tracks. Accidental or deliberate puncture of warbles may lead to allergic reaction.

	Adult Warble Fly
	Warble Fly tracks left by larvae across ribcage
	Warble Fly larvae <i>H.bovis</i> infestation in spine
	Warble Fly damage
	Warble Fly capsules under surface of skin