ARMYARD manure and other rapidly decaying organic matter are the main breeding grounds for houseflies. Houseflies not only annoy both humans and animals but are also carriers of many diseases and parasites, such as typhoid, tuberculosis, dysentery, and intestinal worms (1), as well as of infantile paralysis (7). The polio virus occurs at times in the contents of sewers and open privies, and flies feeding thereon have been found to contain it. Whether polio is usually or seldom thus spread, the possibility constitutes an additional reason for fighting the filthy fly.

The legs of the housefly are thickly covered with hairs and bristles which readily pick up germs whenever they come in contact with infected material. Then, subsequently, when human foods are contacted, they become contaminated with the germs. Many germs live for a long time in the fly’s alimentary canal and are either voided in its excrement or extruded in small droplets of regurgitated matter from the mouth.

Farmyard manure and decaying organic matter not only serve as a source of food for flies and their larvae but provide a favorable environment for the development of the eggs. Fly eggs hatch quickly and larvae grow rapidly in horse manure because of its loose nature and its ready decomposition which engenders much heat. Cow manure, relatively wet and compact, is a less favorable medium, but with bedding, and under some conditions without it, the dryer portions promote fly multiplication.

The female fly usually deposits her eggs in the interstices below the surface of the mass of manure. Each female may lay 100 to 150 eggs at a time. These usually hatch the next day, the larvae emerging and feeding upon the decaying organic matter for 5 to 14 days. The larvae then pupate and the young flies emerge 3 to 10 days later. A new generation may arise within the space of 10 days to 2 weeks. The sudden appearance of clouds of flies near actively fermenting manure piles is due to this rapid multiplication and short life cycle.

While fly numbers can be reduced by the use of traps, sprays, and electric screens, a more complete control is needed. To that end their feeding and breeding places should be destroyed or rendered incapable of supporting larval growth. Farm manure, one of the main breeding and feeding mediums, obviously should not be destroyed or rendered unfit for crop fertilization, but should, if possible, be made unfit for the larval growth. An ideal larvicide should be cheap, readily available, and, if possible, should increase the fertilizing value of the manure. Borax and boric acid seem to meet these requirements.