

I get asked lots of questions as County Agent. Some are very easy to answer and others can be extremely difficult. Lately, I've been getting one of those questions that are very easy to answer, but extremely difficult to deal with. That is, "What is the best way to control fire ants?" The answer is, "there isn't any one best way to control fire ants." Easy answer, but that answer, of course, makes the person ask more questions. So, I thought this would be a good time to write about controlling those pesky little fire ants.

There are several different chemical control methods out there to choose from and fire ant control recommendations aren't the same for all people and locations. You can spend as much money and as much time as you want in controlling fire ants. In most cases, people spend too much time and too much money on fire ant control. Ask yourself the following questions; How large is the area where I want to control fire ants? How soon do I want to have fire ants gone? How many hours a year do I want to spend on fire ant control? How near is this area to a body of water? Will there be pets or children playing in the area? After answering all these questions people look at me and say, "Ok, now how do I get rid of fire ants once and for all"? Sorry folks, you can't. The best that we can do is to get rid of fire ants for a while, 2 months to one year, depending on the method used for control. Then, new fire ant queens move in and establish new colonies.

Here's what happens in most cases. When you treat your yard for fire ants, those that don't die move to the neighbors for a while. Then the neighbor finds fire ants and he treats his yard. The fire ants move back in with you. I've seen this cycle repeated over and over. If an entire neighborhood would work together at the same time to control fire ants we would have a much slower rate of re-infestation by new fire ants.

If you would like to discuss what method of fire ant control best suits your needs feel free to give me, Gary Stockton, a call at 318/251-5134.