

## Zebra Cows

When cows stand around in the field, flies bite them. Ouch! Cows can't swat the flies away. So they bunch up with other cows.

Being in a tight group helps the cows get away from the flies. But it also makes the cows hot. Being overheated can make them sick.

Farmers have tried to find ways to stop the flies from biting the cows. Not much has worked. Until now.

It all started with zebras. Scientists asked why zebras had black and white stripes. One idea was that the stripes kept the flies away.

Flies do not land on black and white things very often. The light from the black and white colors makes it hard for them to see. They don't slow down in time to land.

If black and white stripes worked for zebras, scientists thought they might work for cows too. They did an experiment. They took black cows and painted white stripes on them.

It was a success! The unpainted cows got over 110 bites in 30 minutes. The striped cows got only 60 bites. Painting black and white stripes on cows cut fly bites by half.

The farmers are happy that the scientists have solved the problem of fly bites. Now they just need to buy some paint. Hooray for zebra cows!



This page has been intentionally left blank.

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_ DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

1. What problem did farmers want to solve?
  - a. Flies biting cows
  - b. Cows biting zebras
  - c. Cows getting sick
  - d. Flies eating crops
  
2. What animal inspired the experiment?
  - a. Cows
  - b. Zebras
  - c. Pandas
  - d. Horses
  
3. Why didn't the scientists paint the cows another color?
  - a. Because white was their favorite color
  - b. Because they only had white paint
  - c. Because the cows liked white
  - d. Because black and white colors make it hard for flies to see
  
4. Which cows got fewer fly bites?
  - a. Black cows
  - b. White cows
  - c. Black cows with white stripes
  - d. White cows with black stripes

Instructions for teachers:

These questions can be used to assess understanding of the reading passage.

The item in bold is the correct answer for each question.

1. What problem did farmers want to solve?
  - a. **Flies biting cows**
  - b. Cows biting zebras
  - c. Cows getting sick
  - d. Flies eating crops
2. What animal inspired the experiment?
  - a. Cows
  - b. **Zebras**
  - c. Pandas
  - d. Horses
3. Why didn't the scientists paint the cows another color?
  - a. Because white was their favorite color
  - b. Because they only had white paint
  - c. Because the cows liked white
  - d. **Because black and white colors make it hard for flies to see**
4. Which cows got fewer fly bites?
  - a. Black cows
  - b. White cows
  - c. **Black cows with white stripes**
  - d. White cows with black stripes