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A-ALL PEST TERMITE EXTERMINATORS, INC.
972-241-5223

AALLPEST@YAHOO.COM

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atticpartyanimals.com

The Party Animal News

King Ranch & Texas Fever

In the 1947 book *Big Country: Texas* by Donald Day he described “Texas fever” and how there was prejudice against cattle from the state. The infamous King Ranch isolated the malady as “tick fever” and Robert Kleberg, the attorney for the ranch and Richard King’s son-in-law, pioneered the way to defeat the disease by using a dipping vat against the tick and also importing Brahman Bulls from India which had an immunity to the “Texas Tick Fever”.

Home pest control service in the USA is about 100 years old and is unique because we have, as stated in the British book *Termites: A World Problem* by Norman E Hickin, “...a high standard of living and the ability to pay for the freedom from the anxiety associated with the presence of noxious insects and decay,...”.

Luckily, being a second generation pest control operator, I have experienced half of that history. I can reflect back on the 1970’s when tick jobs were very common. I can recall the treatments, including treating the higher areas of the fence and walls of the home and all the crack and crevices inside the house with organophosphates.

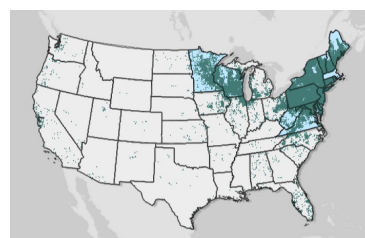
In the 70s, my Dad, the founder of A-All, had a house to treat for ticks in Cedar Hill, TX. We called the place Tickville. It was for sale and my dad wanted to buy it because it had a big yard. But all kids voted “no” because of the ticks and also a change in schools.

Tick borne diseases are something to avoid at all cost. Just run an internet search on Lyme disease and celebrities. There is a long list of sufferers. There is no fast cure for this disease. I have also mentioned in the past that a bite from the Lone Star Tick can cause a meat allergy (AGS) for the rest of the unfortunate victim’s life. It seems ticks had a long term plan to get back at the King Ranch. But it’s important to note that the meat allergy has gone beyond our borders as this tick has expanded its range and is now associated with the southeastern, midwestern and recently added northeastern parts of the US as well. The key characteristic of the culprit is a star on the back of the tick.

Texas has the potential to have great numbers of sufferers from these diseases, but we don’t compared to other areas of the country. There has even been a decline in Texas tick jobs. Why? The fire ant. They likely entered the US through Mobile, Alabama in the 1930s and by the 70s had become an invasive species in Texas. The environmental impact of the fire ant on small mammals and other insects is enormous. That is the bad news, but there is also good news because they changed the dynamic of the tick population in Texas. And because of the fire ant, we have much less occurrence of these debilitating tick diseases.

I would like to point out that the state supports hunting, which contributes to a lower number of hosts for the ticks, therefore maintaining a healthier deer population. I believe the fire ant also attacks the ticks, even though there are articles indicating the ticks can avoid fire ants. Nevertheless, tick populations are low here, but they are still out in our environment.

If you look at the CDC website you can see the important areas for Lyme disease. Below is the 2019 location of Lyme Disease cases in the US. (The last year they have data for this is 2020, and since that was a pandemic year, I felt more folks were staying inside and 2019 would be a better representative year.) If you do hike in Texas use repellents. And if you travel outside of Texas, make sure outside hiking clothes are sprayed with appropriate repellents. Tuck pants in boots, and check yourself and the kids over after hikes. They even have ready to use kits, so if you get a tick on you, the tick can be saved for analysis for diseases. Be safe out there this summer! - David



2019 Lyme Disease Cases Over Time by State of Residence - United States – source- www.cdc.gov/lyme/datasurveillance/lyme-disease-maps.html

We VALUE our customers!

A-ALL PEST TERMITE EXTERMINATORS, INC.

17819 Davenport Rd Ste 335
Dallas, TX 75252

Phone: 972-241-5223
aallpest@yahoo.com
atticpartyanimals.com



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Time for some R&R

*Its that time of year for a break, so we wanted to let you know we will be closed for a long **July 4th** Holiday weekend from Friday, June 30th through July 4th. We hope you get to spend some time with friends and family.*

*We will also be closing for a **vacation** at the end of August from Friday, August 25th through Labor Day, September 4th.*

Have a wonderful, safe summertime!



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