Beneficial Species Profile

Photo credit: Susan Ellis, Bugwood.org

Common Name: Cheese skipper

Scientific Name: *Piophila casei*

Order and Family: Diptera, Piophilidae

Size and Appearance:

	Length (mm)	**Appearance**
Egg	0.63-0.74mm	Cylindrical with pearl white coloring
Larva/Nymph	9-10mm	Cylindrical and white with black mouthparts
Adult	2.5-4.5mm	Metallic black-bronze coloring with yellow legs
Pupa (if applicable)	2.9-3.9mm	Dark brown color

Type of feeder (Chewing, sucking, etc.): Larvae with mouth hooks and adults with sponging mouthparts on end of proboscis.

Host/s: Larvae can be found on old and moldy cheese, rotten meat and animal carcasses. In Forensic cases, the presence of larvae can be used to determine postmortem interval.

Description of Benefits (predator, parasitoid, pollinator, etc.): Cheese skippers tend to appear during the later decomposition stages when a corpse is drying out. The larval stages can be used to calculate postmortem interval.

Females lay eggs in stored meats and cheeses. Economic costs associated with loss of product, pest management and possible medical expenses. It is common for enteric myiasis to occur when eggs or larvae are consumed in infested meat or cheese. Myiasis is an infection caused by fly larvae. In this case, enteric refers to infestation in the intestines from the consumption of the eggs or maggots of the cheese skipper.

References:

Byrd, J. H., & Castener, J. L. (2001). *Forensic Entomology: the utility of arthropods in legal investigations*. Boca Raton, FL: CRC Publishing.

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