

Kansas Insect Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants and Extension Personnel



Department of Entomology
123 West Waters Hall
K-State Research and Extension
Manhattan, Kansas 66506
785-532-5891
<http://www.entomology.ksu.edu/extension>

April 3, 2014 No 1

Army Cutworms

Army cutworm infestations have been reported in wheat fields from SC, NC, NW, and SW Kansas. The larvae reported so far are about ½ inch in length and have already reduced some wheat stands throughout the state (see photos).



Photos courtesy of Sandra Wick, Smith Co., KS

These larvae will not pupate, and thus discontinue feeding, for probably 4-6 weeks. Therefore, if you are seeing bare spots in wheat (and may see them in alfalfa and canola as well) due to army cutworms, these spots will probably continue to get larger as the larvae consume more plant tissue as they continue to grow. If you see flocks of birds feeding in alfalfa, wheat, and/or canola fields this could be an indication of an army cutworm infestation. Birds can sometimes do a pretty good job of reducing these populations to inconsequential levels. If an insecticide application is deemed appropriate, please consult the 2014 KSU Wheat Insect Management Guide for treatment thresholds and insecticides registered for treatment army cutworms:

<http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/MF745.pdf>

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Alfalfa Weevils

Alfalfa weevil larvae were just hatching on 31 March, in south central Kansas. They had not even started feeding yet as no pin-prick sized holes in leaves or any nibbled terminals were noted. Fields in north central Kansas were also sampled on 31 March, but no larvae were detected. They are probably hatching by now, 3 April, but as long as the average daily temperatures are only in the mid-50's °F, the larval development and consequent feeding will be relatively slow. However, when temperatures warm alfalfa weevil activity will increase and defoliation will proceed very quickly depending upon infestation levels. So, monitoring should start immediately - but do not be too quick to 'pull the trigger' on an insecticide application. Generally, waiting until about 33-50% of the stems (1 larva/3 stems or 1 larva/2 stems) have feeding larvae will increase the effectiveness of the application. Also, ensure that there will be at least 3 days of above 50°F temperatures without a moisture event immediately after the application. Please consult the 2014 Alfalfa Insect Management Guide for rates of registered insecticides:

<http://www.ksre.ksu.edu/bookstore/pubs/MF809.pdf>



Small alfalfa weevil larvae and pinprick feeding holes caused by early instar larval feeding.

Jeff Whitworth

Holly Davis

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Insect Diagnostic Laboratory Report

<http://entomology.k-state.edu/extension/diagnostician/recent-samples.html>

Eva Zurek

Sincerely,

Jeff Whitworth
Extension Specialist
Field Crops
phone: 785/532-5656
e-mail: jwhitwor@ksu.edu

Holly Davis
Research Associate
Phone: (785) 532-4739
e-mail: holly3@ksu.edu

Eva Zurek
Insect Diagnostician
Phone: (785) 532-4710
e-mail: ezurek@ksu.edu



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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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