

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>

October 2, 2015 No 23

Control Volunteer Wheat
Armyworms and Army cutworms in Wheat
Sugarcane Aphids
Insect Diagnostic Laboratory Report

Control Volunteer Wheat

Just another reminder that all volunteer wheat (and there seems to be plenty around north central Kansas) should be destroyed at least 2 weeks prior to germination of the planted wheat to mitigate infestation/infection by insects, mites, and/or pathogens.

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Armyworms and Army cutworms in Wheat

Several planted fields have already been sprayed to control worms. What we have been seeing in south central and north central Kansas are a combination of armyworms (see pic) and fall armyworms (see pic). Both of these species will do a similar type of damage. When they are small they will feed on one side of the wheat leaf causing what is commonly called 'window paning'. As the larvae grow they devour more and more tissue until it may become quite noticeable and, under unfavorable growing conditions, may even severely reduce the stand (see pic). Armyworm larvae will feed, probably for a couple more weeks, depending upon temperatures, and then pupate. If we haven't yet had a hard freeze, they may emerge as moths and lay eggs in other wheat fields. The first hard freeze will terminate armyworms. Army cutworms, on the other hand, will not be terminated by the first hard freeze but will continue to develop all winter, feeding anytime temperatures are over about 45°F and will complete their development in the spring (see pic). So, it is important to make proper identification of armyworms feeding in wheat as armyworms and fall armyworms will not be feeding throughout the winter and early spring but army cutworms will.

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Armyworm



Fall Armyworm



Photo courtesy of Tom Maxwell, Saline County



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Sugarcane Aphids

Sugarcane aphids (SCA) colonies have rapidly declined in some fields in north central Kansas, slowly declined in others, but actually increased somewhat in other fields. In one field, approximately 90% of all previous SCA's are gone and enormous numbers of lacewing adults remain (see pics). However, prior to the latest cold front, most top leaves had winged aphids with nymphs. This means, evidently, that they are still migrating in and trying to establish colonies. However, with huge numbers of beneficials now present, it seems unlikely that they will be successful, especially with the recent cooler weather. Everywhere that SCA colonies became established, they produced honeydew, which coated the sorghum leaves, and was then covered with a dark sooty mold. However, when the colonies are eliminated the honeydew is no longer sticky and the black mold becomes dry and washes off (see pic).



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Jeff Whitworth

Holly Schwarting

Insect Diagnostic Laboratory Report

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

Eva Zurek

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Sincerely,

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

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Holly Schwarting
Research Associate
Phone: (785) 532-4730
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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