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Kansas Insect Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants, and Extension Personnel

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What's the buzz? ---- Part 2

Come and gone was the late-June – mid-July "buzz" of green June beetles as they skimmed about alarming many people who assumed that the "buzzers" were bees of some sort. The current "buzz" is entirely different ----- rather than a buzz produced by the beating of wings, **male cicadas** produce species-distinct sounds by vibrating a "tympanylmembrane" located within the abdomen.

While several smaller early-season cicada species have come and gone (mostly unnoticed), there are more species of larger late-season cicadas which responsible for the current "buzz". Actually, "buzz" is an oversimplification of the sounds produced by each species. With little difficulty, a person can discern which species is "singing".


Tibicen pruinasus - male


Tibicen wakeri - female


Tibicen dealbatus - male

Three of the more current species are (more-or-less) tree dwellers. *Tibicen pruinosus* calling typically picks up and intensifies towards sunset, sounding a somewhat repetitive za-wie za-wie za-wie za-wie with frequent breaks between. Both *T. walkeri* and *T. delbatus* may begin calling in the morning and continue through out the day and evening. Both produce a distinct, somewhat uninterrupted zwick zwick zwick zwick zwick. The two can be visually separated by the lack or abundance of white abdominal pruinose


Tibicen dorsatus - male


Tibicen inauditus - green form

Two species are more commonly associated with grassland/shrubby areas. *T. dorsatus* is the largest/robust and loudest cicada of the current mix. Their "buzz" is almost akin to a throaty rattle. All of the aforementioned species are comparatively larger than *T. inauditus* which (at the most) has a body length measuring 1-1 ¼ inches. Especially in September, their populations peak as seen their active movements as they fly from perch to perch. Their call is a very piercing/searing unwavering zzzzzzz which begins somewhat quietly, gradually escalates and then wanes. They actively call throughout the day but cease after sunset.

All of these cicadas are categorized as "annual cicadas". This is somewhat misleading as "annual" implies a 1-year developmental cycle. Due to the complexity of the underground development of cicada nymphs, precise seasonal life histories have not been defined for these species. The general belief is that a 2 to 4 year time span is required for their development. However, each year, representatives of each of these asynchronous species emerge and are present. And as currently seen/heard, in some years, these "dogday cicadas" are especially abundant as evidenced by the din-in-the-air.

Bob Bauernfeind

Anhydrous Ammonia and Africanized Honey Bee Training for First Responders:

The Kansas Department of Agriculture and Kansas Farmers Service Association are presenting Anhydrous Ammonia Training for First Responders.

Programs begin at 6:00pm and last until around 8:45pm. Most of the program will focus on Anhydrous Ammonia Training, however, during the last 30 minutes of the program, Tom Sanders from the KDA Plant Protection and Weed Control Program, will present a section on First Responder preparedness for Africanized Honey Bees. Dates and Locations are:

August 29, Cairo Coop (10 miles east of Pratt), Cairo, KS
August 30, Sedgwick County Extension Office in Wichita, KS

Walk-ins are welcomed, registrations are encouraged. For more information or to register, please call 785-296-3786.

Sharon Dobesh

Are Oak Leaf Itch Mite Populations Declining?

In 2004 and 2005 we had major outbreaks of bites caused by an itch mite (*Pyemotes herfsi*) introduced from Europe. The mite is predaceous on the larvae of the midges that form the galls on the leaves of pin, red, and black oaks. In the past two years, we have found high percentages of the midge larvae being predated by these mites; and accordingly, we have had a high frequency of calls and messages reporting the incidence of these bites and requesting information on how to control these mites and how to avoid their bites. We have experimented with various control strategies aimed at controlling the midge larval populations expecting this way to ultimately control the mites supported by the midge larvae; however, we still don't have a definite recommendation on a control treatment.

So far this year, we have found through our survey, a very low rate of galls infested with the mites; likewise, we have had a low incidence of calls and reports about bite outbreaks here in Kansas as well as in eastern Nebraska (where cases have been the worst in the last two years). Interestingly, we have been finding high rates of midge larvae being parasitized by tiny larvae of a highly specialized species of wasps. We will keep monitoring these parasitic wasps to determine whether or not the observed decline in the mite population is somewhat related to the wasp's presence on the midge larvae.

Alberto B. Broce

Control Volunteer Wheat:

Volunteer wheat has not been very evident this summer primarily due to the hot, dry weather. However, with recent rains, and somewhat cooler weather, it's time to consider destroying it prior to planting wheat.

Volunteer wheat is the most common reservoir for many of our most common wheat pests. Hessian flies, wheat curl mites and aphids, both green bugs and bird cherry oat, utilize volunteer wheat as a harborage and food source until domestic wheat has germinated. Eliminating volunteer wheat a couple of weeks prior to planting will help reduce the infestation potential of these pests and thus lessen the risk of some of the common diseases transmitted by these pests, such as wheat streak, barley yellow dwarf, etc. The longer the period of time between volunteer destruction and planting, the better, but at least two weeks is essential. Just ensure that the volunteer wheat is dead well before your wheat emerges as these pests will quickly leave dying plants and move into any nearby wheat whether planted or volunteer. Thus, it is best to make this a community effort with your neighbors cooperating or you may be the source of their problems and vice versa.

For additional information please see your local County Extension Agent or visit: http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/crpsl2/mf1004.pdf .

Soybean Aphids:

We've avoided soybean aphid infestations in Kansas so far this year however, as temperatures moderate the potential still exists for these aphids to migrate into the state. There are considerable acres of late planted soybeans that are just reaching or are in the early reproductive stages which means they still may be vulnerable to soybean aphid feeding damage. In 2002, the first year soybean aphids were detected in Kansas; they were not discovered until late August. If soybean aphids are identified in your area please let your County Agricultural Extension Agent know or e-mail Phil Sloderbeck (psloderb@ksu.edu) or Jeff Whitworth (jwhitwor@ksu.edu) with the location.

Phil Sloderbeck and Jeff Whitworth

Soybean Insects:

The good news is that soybean bean aphid numbers have been very low this summer. Out of a dozen or so reports covering 14 counties we have had only a couple of reports of trace numbers of aphids. We are still interested in hearing about any observations on soybean aphids so if you have been checking fields send us a quick note with the date(s), counties and description of aphid populations observed. Actually aphid numbers have been so low there seems to be little interest in reporting on aphid numbers. However, we are just as interested in documenting that fields were checked and no aphids were observed as we are in cases where aphids were found. Just e-mail your observations to psloderb@ksu.edu.

The bad news is that we are getting some reports of late season defoliators and pod feeders occurring in some fields, especially in southern Kansas. There have been a few reports of corn earworms feeding on pods, and wollybear caterpillars beginning to feed on foliage. Fields that are still in the process of filling pods should probably be checked for significant levels of these and other late season pests.


Corn Earworm


Green Cloverworm


Green Stink Bug Nymph


Yellow Stripped Armyworm


Wollybear Caterpillars


Soybean Looper

Phil Sloderbeck

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intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

Sincerely,

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