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Kansas Insect Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants, and Extension Personnel

Department of Entomology
239 West Waters Hall
K-State Research and Extension
Manhattan, KS 66506-4027

Tel: 785-532-5891
Fax: 785-532-6258



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Brown Wheat Mite:

We have received several calls this past week regarding some heavy populations of brown wheat mite (Fig. 1) in western Kansas (Wallace, Thomas and Logan counties), in some case sufficient to kill plants. Some reduction in tillering was also apparent. In one case, substantial populations were causing typical symptoms (Fig. 2) on an irrigated wheat circle. This is unusual because brown wheat mite is known as a pest of wheat in dryland conditions. Dry conditions favor mite population growth and impede the plants' ability to recover from mite damage. There are also indications that rainfall causes direct mortality to mite populations.

Eggs are laid in the soil. The winter eggs are red in color (Fig. 3) and several generations of mites can occur in early spring before the white, over summering eggs are produced. The next two weeks will be critical as mite populations decline naturally once the summer eggs are laid around mid-April as these remain dormant until autumn. Provided plants survive this period, the prognosis for recovery is good, provided we get some rain. Decisions to apply a pesticide (Dimate, Disyston, or methyl parathion are the choices) should be balanced by the yield potential of the field and the likelihood of sufficient rainfall to assist plant recovery. The threshold for treatment is thought to be several hundred mites per row foot, or 30 – 50 per plant. Scouting is best performed during the early afternoon on warm days when the greatest proportion of mites are up on the plants.



Figure 1



Figure 2

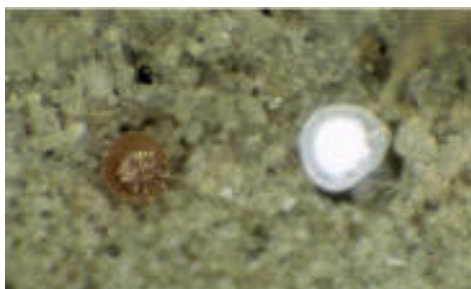


Figure 3

Alfalfa Weevil:

Alfalfa Weevil larval damage is being reported in some areas. With the mild winter that we had in some areas of the state, it is time to begin looking for weevil larvae. Information on weevil management can be found in the publication Alfalfa Insect Management 2004 which is on the www as an acrobat pdf document at: <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/library/ENTML2/MF809.pdf> or on the Alfalfa Weevil web page: <http://www.oznet.ksu.edu/entomology/extension/InsectInfo/Alfalfa/Alfalfa%20Weevil.html>

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Sincerely,

J.P. Michaud
Integrated Pest Management
KSU Agricultural Research Center - Hays, KS

Phillip E. Sloderbeck
Entomology
SW Area Extension Office-Garden City, KS