

# Kansas State University Department of Entomology Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants, Extension Personnel & Homeowners

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



**August 31, 2018 No 19**

---

Sorghum Update – ‘Headworms’, Beneficials, and Aphids  
Volunteer Wheat

## **Sorghum Update – ‘Headworms’, Beneficials, and Aphids**

Sorghum continues to get the attention of many pests and beneficials. Chinch bug populations are not diminishing even though they are not as noticeable because most are feeding around the base of the plants and behind leaf sheaths on the stalks. Much late planted, or at least slower developing, sorghum is still vulnerable to these chinch bugs. Bugs may also move up to the heads as they emerge from the whorl to feed on the forming kernels that provide a succulent source of nutrients.

‘Sorghum headworms’, mostly corn earworms but also a few fall armyworms, are infesting all sorghum fields (not yet in the soft dough stage) that we monitored throughout north central Kansas. Most fields have close to, or are exceeding, 100% infestation levels (1 or more larvae/head). These larvae are present in all different sizes, or developmental stages, from 1<sup>st</sup> to 4<sup>th</sup> instars. Thus, they will be feeding on these kernels for at least another 7 – 10 days.



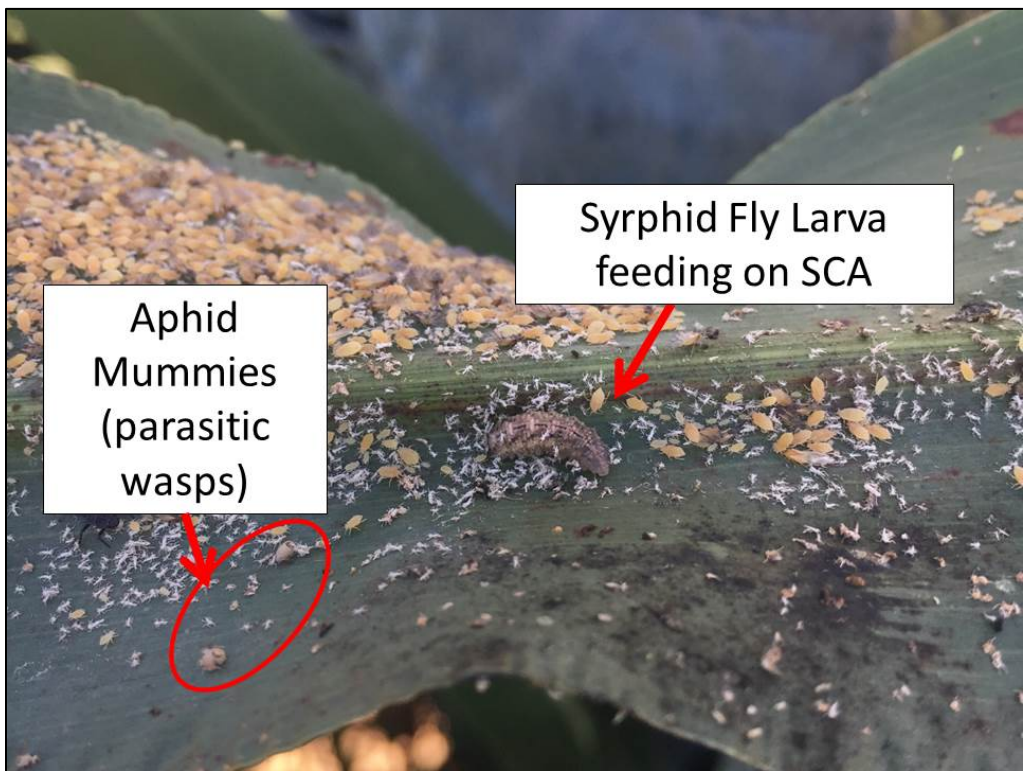
1<sup>st</sup> – 3<sup>rd</sup> Instar  
'Sorghum  
Headworms'

Remember, between flowering and soft dough, these larvae will cause 5% yield loss/ worm/ head. Very few beneficials are available to help control headworm populations. However, there are huge populations of beneficials currently present to help control any aphid pests that are, or might be present in the near future.

Corn leaf aphid populations were common on earlier planted sorghum, and still are on later planted sorghum that is just reaching the whorl stage. These corn leaf aphids have really helped fuel the beneficial populations. Fields that have headed out are swarming with lady beetle adults and larvae, syrphid or hover flies, green lacewings, and parasitic wasps.



Lady Beetle Larvae  
Feeding on SCA



Syrphid Fly Larva  
feeding on SCA

Aphid  
Mummies  
(parasitic  
wasps)

# Kansas Insect Newsletter

August 31, 2018 No 19

---



Sugarcane aphid (SCA) populations are becoming scattered around north central KS, slowly so far, and are really attracting the attention of all these beneficials, which will hopefully help control colony growth. For management considerations and recommendations for these, and other sorghum pests, please refer to the 2018 Sorghum Insect Management Guide: <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf742.pdf>

---

Jeff Whitworth

Holly Davis

HOME

## Volunteer Wheat

Again, please remember every moisture event prompts the growth of volunteer wheat. This volunteer wheat needs to be controlled at least 2 weeks prior to planting to help mitigate *all* wheat pests; pathogens, mites, and insects.



# Kansas Insect Newsletter

August 31, 2018 No 19

---

Sincerely,

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

Holly Davis  
Research Associate  
Phone: (785) 532-4730  
e-mail: [holly3@ksu.edu](mailto:holly3@ksu.edu)



Kansas State University is committed to making its services, activities and programs accessible to all participants. If you have special requirements due to a physical, vision, or hearing disability, contact *LOCAL NAME, PHONE NUMBER*. (For TDD, contact Michelle White-Godinet, Assistant Director of Affirmative Action, Kansas State University, 785-532-4807.)

## **Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service**

K-State Research and Extension is an equal opportunity provider and employer. Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension Work, Acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, as amended. Kansas State University, County Extension Councils, Extension Districts, and United States Department of Agriculture Cooperating, Ernie Minton, Director.