Alfalfa Update

Alfalfa fields sampled this week in north central Kansas had not really changed a great deal with stems anywhere from 2.5 to 9.5 inches tall. Sampling the taller stems (8 - 9.5”) resulted in a composite infestation of 10%. Sampling only the smaller stems (2.5 – 4.5”) resulted in a composite infestation of 27%. The lowest overall infestation level detected from any field was 10% and the highest infestation level was 30%. Smaller stems had smaller larvae with no, or very little damage or defoliation, while larger stems often had evidence of feeding, but no larvae. Thus, it seems the earlier hatching larvae may have been killed by the recent cold weather, or at least populations were reduced. However, we did find 3rd instar larvae and even a pupa. There are also quite a few small 1st instar larvae. This probably means eggs are still hatching with more larvae to come, so at least 1 more week of monitoring would be prudent.
Pea aphids are still present in all alfalfa fields sampled but not yet in numbers to be concerned about. However, there were no beneficials, (lady beetles, lacewings, or parasitic wasps) noted either.

For more information relative to alfalfa insect management, please see the Alfalfa Insect Management Guide: https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/pubs/mf809.pdf
Sincerely,

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

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

Eva Zurek  
Insect Diagnostician  
Phone: (785) 532-4710  
e-mail: ezurek@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, John D. Floros, Director.