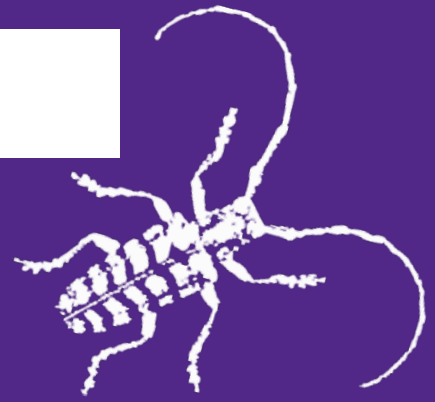


Kansas State University Extension Entomology Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants, Extension Personnel & Homeowners

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March Flies causing concern in Southwest Kansas

March Flies (*Bibio sp.*) have begun emerging in large numbers in some areas of southwest Kansas. The synchronous nature of adult emergence in spring draws attention and concern as thousands of adults can show up almost overnight on structures and in cropland. These congregations of small (~6 mm), large-eyed flies are mating swarms and generally will be short lived as adults survive only a few days to a week.

Another name for these flies is "Lovebug" since males and females will attach themselves at the end of their abdomens and remain like that at all times even while flying. After mating, females will excavate a small chamber in the soil, lay eggs and then die in the same chamber. Just as the adults congregate, so do the larvae. Dense pockets of hundreds of larvae can sometimes be unearthed. These larvae generally are detritivores, feeding on dead vegetation and other organic matter in the upper portion of the soil. However, some species are known to feed on living plant roots and are considered pests of various cereal, forage and vegetable crops. In 1891, entomologist Vernon L. Kellogg wrote of a new Bibionid fly emerging in large numbers in many wheat fields of seven western Kansas counties during the last week of April. The large swarms of flies concerned farmers, but no evidence of damage by the flies was ever



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detected despite a large number of larvae being found in the soil weeks previous to adult emergence. Kellogg stated that the adults disappeared “suddenly and simultaneously”. Despite a large number of flies being detected in wheat and alfalfa this year, no unusual damage to these crops has been noted and the mating swarms should vanish in the coming week.



Anthony Zukoff—Southwest Research & Extension Center

HOME

Insecticide Ear Tag use in Cattle

Insecticide impregnated ear tags can be a valuable tool for the control for flies and selected tick species in cattle. In this video we discuss how insecticide impregnated ear tags work and some tips to make them as successful as possible in your pest management program.

https://youtu.be/dFSf_3RQjOc

Cassandra Olds – Livestock and Veterinary

HOME

Alfalfa Weevils

The only alfalfa weevils observed this week were relatively mature larvae (see fig. 1) and thus most feeding damage should be about finished. All alfalfa fields monitored had been treated, with one exception. This year's overall alfalfa weevil infestations seemed considerably reduced compared to most of the past years. This, coupled with good growing conditions, allowed plants to keep up with alfalfa weevil feeding resulting in less defoliation than usual as seen in fig. 2 (The plant on the left was typical of an untreated field which was adjacent to a treated field from which the plant on the right was removed from).



Figure 1 Alfalfa weevil larvae (picture by Cody Wyckoff)



Figure 2 Alfalfa defoliation Left: untreated field Right treated field (Cody Wyckoff)

Jeff Whitworth – Field Crops

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Wheat Aphids

Wheat aphids, primarily bird cherry oat but with a few greenbugs mixed in, have been migrating into Kansas, especially the southern parts, over the last couple of weeks. Sampling a couple dozen fields throughout the central part of the state, however, over the last week (from I-35 to Hwy 77 west to east and from Hwy 24 north to Hwy 56 on the south) yielded very few aphids but also very few beneficials-which makes sense. However, in one field we did find one aphid -- just as the only lady beetle we found in that field also found it and promptly gobbled it up (see fig 3). Most wheat was at least at the jointing stage. If aphid migrations increase significantly in the next couple of weeks, coupled with the lack of beneficials, these aphid populations could explode and thus cause some stress to the developing wheat. Thus, monitoring should continue -- but please remember it takes approximately 20+ aphids/tiller throughout the field, with very few beneficials, to actually cause a negative effect on yield. Also, please remember adding an insecticide to an application of a fungicide to kill any insect pests, "just in case" is never a good idea.



Figure 3 Lady Beetle (picture by Cody Wyckoff)

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Bug Joke of the Week

Q. What do you get if you cross a bee and a bunny?

A. A honey bunny!

Sharon Schroll

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Sincerely,

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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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