

Bluestem Breezes
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Insect Update

The K-State Extension Agronomy group regularly publishes the Kansas Insect Newsletter. This week's column highlights a few updates from that newsletter that are beneficial to soybean and sorghum producers.

Soybean Pest Update - Double cropped soybeans are still very much in the reproductive stages throughout north central Kansas. Thus, they are still vulnerable to a variety of pests – and pest populations seem to be increasing. Green cloverworms (see pic) have been feeding on leaves for the past couple of weeks but are starting to cease feeding to begin pupating. They rarely cause actual yield loss but usually cause concern because of the amount of defoliation they often cause. While green cloverworms don't feed on the pods or seeds, adult bean leaf beetles and corn earworm larvae (a.k.a. soybean podworms) do. Both species, bean leaf beetles and corn earworms, seem to be increasing throughout south central and north central parts of the state. The corn earworm larvae will usually feed on the seed within the pod and will only feed for about 10-14 days. However, bean leaf beetles will continue to feed until harvest, or they disperse to overwintering sites.

There are still a few soybean aphid populations in north central Kansas, however there are more winged adults present which probably means they are mostly finished feeding and preparing to migrate to overwintering sites (they probably do not overwinter successfully in Kansas – we hope). We have received several calls this week relative to these “interesting little green worms” in soybeans. These are silver spotted skipper larvae and will feed on leaves but should not defoliate enough, on a field-wide basis, to impact yield.

Sorghum Pest Update - The majority of the double cropped sorghum seems to be past flowering and almost to the soft dough stage. This means much of this crop is almost past the susceptible stage relative to corn earworms (a.k.a. sorghum headworms), which is about soft dough. Later planted sorghum still needs to be monitored though as earworm moths are still ovipositing in sorghum heads. Sugarcane aphids (SCA) are still very active in north central Kansas, as are their natural enemies, and thus these populations should also continue to be monitored. The insecticides registered for sugarcane aphids have performed really well at controlling these aphids, as have the products used for controlling headworms. Just remember, gallonage is extremely important for SCA applications.

The sugarcane aphids are slowing down...for now - The SCA movement in Kansas has slowed down for the moment with the sorghum crop maturing and drying down. South-central Kansas seemed to be the "hot zone" this year, but many counties further north and west got to see populations of these aphids as well. Some chemical representatives have suggested spraying sorghum fields as soon as SCA populations of any size are found, however finding a few SCA does not necessarily warrant immediate treatment. Using our new thresholds, many farmers outside of the “hot zone” in Kansas did not have to spray their sorghum fields for SCA.

Next season it will be important to monitor the progression of the SCA northward from TX and OK and observe thresholds before treating. This is especially important because populations of SCA can be swept into the same fields multiple times depending on the weather, and the chemical options for treating the SCA will be even more limited next year. A federal judge recently ruled against the sale of

Sulfoxaflor which is the active ingredient in one of our best tools against SCA, Transform insecticide. Our SCA Task Force is currently working on what this means for SCA control next season, but it will likely mean that Transform will not be sold anymore. We will keep you posted on this issue.

Contact the Extension Office to receive the new thresholds for SCA.

Brand names appearing in this publication are for product identification purposes only. No endorsement is intended, nor is criticism implied of similar products not mentioned.

For additional information, visit the Extension Office (215 Kansas, Courthouse, Alma; kamayer@ksu.edu; 765-3821). For Bluestem Breezes archives, check out wabaunsee.ksu.edu.