

Armyworms attacking wheat

Well, this past week has definitely been interesting. Emotions for everyone involved with wheat harvest were running high with the discovery of kernel damage caused by the wheathead armyworm.

The elevators that discovered the problem asked others to check, and people soon realized that many locations were having a problem with a high percentage of insect damaged kernels. Flour mills will only accept wheat with a low percentage of insect damage.

These 1- to 1.25-inch long, lime-green to tan worms, with stripes along the side, have caused a problem for several reasons. First, the area has been cool and wet. Warmer weather is needed to promote the diseases and parasites which usually attack these worms. Thus, more of them were able to stay around longer than normal, and continue feeding.

Second, these armyworms feed mostly at night, so during the day very few worms would have been seen from the road.

Third, this insect has not been a problem for a number of years. If farmers or consultants did see this insect out in the field, they may not have realized it was a problem.

Fourth, when the wheat starts drying down, farmers and consultants divert their attention to the planting and scouting of spring crops. Typically, nothing besides hail or high winds causes damage to the wheat at this point.

All of these factors combined led to the situation we are currently in.

This brings up a couple of other concerns. Will the wheathead armyworm continue feeding on the wheat when it is in the bin? The answer is no. These worms may live for a few days in the bin and feed on each other, but will die shortly thereafter.

Will the wheathead armyworms be a problem for the corn and grain sorghum? According to our entomologists, they will be completing their life cycle and pupating into a moth in the next week or so, causing minimal if any damage on the spring crops. However, considerable numbers of true armyworms are also present. True armyworms do little damage to the wheat kernel, but they are ravenous eaters and will consume a lot of foliage. They may not be as developed as the wheathead armyworm and may move off of the wheat onto crops like corn or



Extension Lines

By **Brian Olson**
Extension Agronomist

grain sorghum.

The true armyworm has a smaller head capsule than the wheathead and does not have the tapered body of the wheathead. To see pictures of each and control options for the true armyworm in corn and grain sorghum, follow the appropriate link at the web site below. Control measures for the true armyworm should be considered if the worm is less than 1.25 inches in length.

For Norton and Decatur counties, the farmers may see this as more of a nuisance than anything else due to extra time needed to determine the percentage of insect damage for each load. For Trego, Gove, and Sheridan where the problem is more pervasive, it could cause some serious setbacks for farmers who may have had wheat turned away due to a high percentage of damage in the load.

As I am writing this, we are starting to see signs that the better quality wheat has less wheathead army-

worm feeding. Hopefully, this trend continues and the old adage of the first wheat cut is always the worst will hold true.

An informational flyer on insect-damaged kernels, what producers can do, insurance options and where to send the sample has been provided to elevators for farmers. If you did not receive a copy of this, or to view pictures of the wheathead and the true armyworm, please visit the Web site: www.oznet.ksu.edu/agronomy-block2 and click on the Armyworm Information icon, or visit your local county extension office.

Brian Olson is multi-county extension agronomist for Decatur, Gove, Norton, Sheridan, and Trego counties. E-mail bolson@oznet.ksu.edu if you have any questions or would like to see a newspaper article on a specific crop production topic. For more information, contact the county extension office, 475-8121.

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JULY

Decatur County Community Calendar

Call 785-475-3441

(Call Decatur County Area Chamber of Commerce to have your organization's meeting updated and listed in next month's calendar.)

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
The Oberlin Herald NOW IN OUR 125th YEAR OF SERVICE		1 Dr. Doolittle, Decatur County Hospital; Rotary, Gateway, Noon; Weight Watchers, 12:30-1:30 p.m.	2 Dr. Eskildsen, Decatur County Hospital; Blood Pressure Golden Age, 10:30-11:30 a.m.; Oberlin Business Alliance, LandMark Inn, noon; AA, ambulance barn, 8 p.m.; Jaycees, Red Crown, 8:30 p.m.	3 	4TH OF JULY Fun Day at the swimming pool, games start 1 p.m.; Prairie Chapel Church burgers and melon at the park starting at 4 p.m. to ?? Fireworks at dusk at the fairgrounds.	5 1/2 Price Day Bargain Box Plus
6 Attend the Church of Your Choice	7 Norcatour Rebekahs Lions, Medical Arts Bldg.	8 Dr. Doolittle, Dr. McGowan, Cardiology, Decatur County Hospital; Rotary, Gateway, Noon; Weight Watchers, 12:30-1:30 p.m.; Convention Visitors Bureau, LandMark, 5:30 p.m.	9 Dr. Eskildsen, Decatur County Hospital; Legion Auxiliary meeting, 7:30 p.m.; AA, ambulance barn, 8 p.m.; Norcatour Royal Neighbors	10 Dr. Curtis, Cardiology, Decatur County Hospital	11 Oberlin Royal Neighbors Golden Age, 4 p.m.	12
13 Attend the Church of Your Choice Antique Engine Club potluck, Sappa Manor, 6:30 p.m.	14	15 Dr. Doolittle, Decatur County Hospital; Rotary, Gateway, Noon; Weight Watchers, 12:30-1:30 p.m.	16 Dr. Eskildsen, Decatur County Hospital AA, ambulance barn, 8 p.m.	17 Community Garage Sales Maps Available after 3 p.m. Chamber board meeting, Decatur Co-op board room, noon	18 Chamber Community Garage Sales	19 Chamber Community Garage Sales
20 Attend the Church of Your Choice	21 Dr. McDonald, cataracts, Decatur County Hospital; Lions Club, Medical Arts bldg.; Hospital board meeting, 7 p.m.; Norcatour Rebekah.	22 Dr. Doolittle, Decatur County Hospital; Rotary, Gateway, Noon; Weight Watchers, 12:30-1:30 p.m.	23 Dr. Eskildsen, Dr. Newman, Urology; Dr. Rainwater, Cardiology, Decatur County Hospital; AA, ambulance barn, 8 p.m.	24 Oberlin American Legion Meeting	25	26 Oberlin Business Alliance Beach Party, starting at 10 a.m. and Auction and Garage Sale, old The Bank drive-thru.
27 Attend the Church of Your Choice	28	29 Dr. Doolittle, Decatur County Hospital; Rotary, Gateway, Noon; Weight Watchers, 12:30-1:30 p.m.	30 Oberlin Business Alliance 5th Wednesday Scrip Drawing, OBA stores to sign up. Dr. Eskildsen, Decatur County Hospital; AA, ambulance barn, 8 p.m.; \$3 Bag Day, Bargain Box Plus	31 	Prairie Land Electric Cooperative, Inc.	

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