Alfalfa weevil reported on alfalfa regrowth

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Alfalfa weevil reported on alfalfa regrowth

Abstract
Farmers should watch their fields after the first cutting for delayed or lack of green up due to activity of alfalfa weevils (both larvae and adults). Reports from northeastern and northwestern Iowa indicate that this pest is causing problems this year in alfalfa stubble. Heavy populations of weevil adults and surviving populations of larvae can delay new growth by feeding on the stubble and new buds as they break. This feeding may reduce yields and forage quality in the second and possibly third cuttings.

Keywords
Entomology

Disciplines
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where plots with high aphid populations (more than 250 aphids per plant) were treated with insecticides either applied normally or through nozzles at pressures used for applying postemergence herbicides.

“Applying insecticides as one would a herbicide reduces the ability of the insecticide to kill aphids. By reducing the risk of herbicide drift, growers are not applying the insecticide with the coverage it requires. Our data from 2004 suggest that this reduced coverage allows aphids to survive after the insecticide has been applied.”

A more complete report on this research can be found at the Iowa Soybean Aphid Task Force Web address, www.soybeanaphid.info.

O’Neal is continuing the research in the 2005 crop season. ISU researchers are also working on other methods of managing soybean aphids. Those include:

- Determining the effectiveness of seed treatments on aphids
- Comparing the combination of organophosphate and carbamate tank mixes on soybean aphid management
- Using the natural enemies of soybean aphids to manage this insect.

The Task Force plans regular communication this summer to producers through ISU newsletters, the Web, and through the news media.

Jean McGuire is an extension communications specialist with responsibilities for agriculture and natural resources.

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**Insects and Mites**

**Alfalfa weevil reported on alfalfa regrowth**

by Carol Pilcher, Department of Entomology

Farmers should watch their fields after the first cutting for delayed or lack of green up due to activity of alfalfa weevils (both larvae and adults). Reports from northeastern and northwestern Iowa indicate that this pest is causing problems this year in alfalfa stubble. Heavy populations of weevil adults and surviving populations of larvae can delay new growth by feeding on the stubble and new buds as they break. This feeding may reduce yields and forage quality in the second and possibly third cuttings.

**What do alfalfa weevil larvae look like?** Alfalfa weevil larvae have a dark head that is almost black and are pale green with a white stripe down the back. The young larvae are about \( \frac{1}{16} \)-inch long and may be light yellow in color. After feeding for several days, they turn green. They are \( \frac{5}{16} \)-inch long when full grown.

**What do alfalfa weevil adults look like?** The adult weevils are light brown with a dark brown strip down the back that tapers to a narrow point. They are \( \frac{1}{4} \)-inch long and have a narrow snout.

**How do I scout for larvae and adults in alfalfa stubble?** Start monitoring regrowth 4 to 5 days after the first cutting has been removed from the field. Check 20 1-square-foot areas in the field. Look for larvae and adults on the soil surface and around the alfalfa crowns.
What are the treatment thresholds? Alfalfa weevil larvae usually cause economic damage only on the first cutting of hay. As a result, little information is available on treatment thresholds for the alfalfa stubble. Kansas and Minnesota recommend that growers consider treating fields when 4 to 8 larvae per square foot are present and regrowth is being delayed. In addition, Kansas recommends that if adult weevils have scraped the outer tissue from the stems and damage is widespread, treatment should be considered.

For more information on insecticides labeled for alfalfa weevil, refer to the April 11, 2005, ICM Newsletter article “Alfalfa weevil: Scouting and economic thresholds,” at www.ipm.iastate.edu/ipm/icm/2005/4-11-2005/scoutweevil.html. Please read the product label carefully because some products have different rates of application for larvae and adults.

Are there other insects that prevent regrowth? Other alfalfa pests that may also prevent regrowth include clover leaf weevils and variegated cutworms. Clover leaf weevil larvae are much larger than alfalfa weevil larvae and have a light brown head. Often clover leaf weevil larvae have a white stripe edged with pink down the back. Variegated cutworms vary in color, ranging from tan to greenish-yellow to almost black. A row of small yellow, dagger or diamond-shaped spots occurs down the center of the back. An orange stripe appears along each side.

Carol Pilcher is an instructor and extension program specialist in entomology with responsibilities in pest management and the environment.

Announcements

2005 Weed Science Field Day
by Mike Owen, Department of Agronomy

The 2005 Weed Science Field Day is scheduled for June 23 at the Curtiss Farm on South State Street in Ames. The self-guided field day will begin with registration at 8:30 a.m. and introductory comments will be provided at 9 a.m. Healthy snacks, coffee, and other beverages will be available.

The field day will allow the attendees to review herbicide demonstrations, specialty crop herbicide tolerance trials, no-tillage weed management systems, and herbicide application timing studies. While the Weed Science Field Day has traditionally been directed more for representatives of the ag-chemical industry, it is open to anyone who has an interest in new weed management practices. There is a $20 registration fee, which covers refreshments and a field book. For further information, contact Mike Owen at 515-294-5936 or e-mail at mdowen@iastate.edu.

Mike Owen is a professor of agronomy with research and extension responsibilities in weed management and herbicide use.