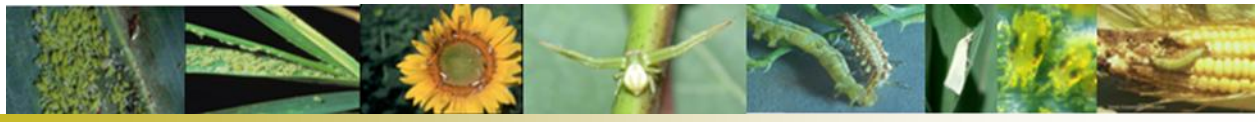

PANHANDLE PEST UPDATE

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

Moth Pest Survey

County Extension Agents with the Texas AgriLife Extension Service from the Panhandle and I have a project this summer to monitor the moth flights of Southwestern corn borer, Western Bean Cutworm, and Fall Armyworm. Eleven agents setup moth traps last week in one to two fields in Dallam, Deaf Smith, Gray, Hartley, Hutchinson, Lipscomb, Moore, Ochiltree, Potter, Randall, Sherman, and Swisher Counties. Weekly trap catches will be posted on the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center website (http://amarillo.tamu.edu/amarillo-center-programs/extension-entomology/insects/) and will be made available in this newsletter, and by the participating county agents. We are thankful to the Texas Corn Producers Board for financially supporting this survey.

Trap catches for this first week had some striking diversity in moth activity. Southwestern corn borer (SWCB) moths were present in all of the above counties. Deaf Smith County had the highest SWCB numbers with 701 in one trap and 473 in a second trap. Also, Hutichinson (102 moths) and Dallam (71 moths) Counties had relatively high moth numbers in one of their traps. SWCB moth numbers in the other traps were from 3 to 35. The presence of SWCB, particularly the high numbers in Deaf Smith County, is earlier than we normally see in June.

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Southwestern corn borer moth

Moth Bucket Trap

Spider mites and Thrips in Corn and Cotton

Spider mites are present in varying infestations in both corn and cotton fields. And thrips are also abundant in fields. The thrips migrating out of wheat are key predators of these early season mite infestations and can clean up mite populations. So, monitor the mite populations to see if the thrips are providing adequate control. The thrips could save the cost of an application.

The current hot and dry conditions are conducive for rapid mite development and a preventative application may be something to consider, particularly in fields with a history of mite

Please continue *Spider mites and Thrips* on page 3

Western Bean Cutworm

Moth Pest Survey

Western Bean Cutworm moths were captured in 7 of 20 traps, but numbers were less than10 in any of the traps.

Dr. Pat Porter, Extension Entomologist, at Lubbock reported last week in the "Focus on South Plains Agriculture" newsletter, http://lubbock.tamu.edu/focus/, the first flight of Fall armyworm (FAW) moths at Lubbock. Last week was our first week to capture moths and there were seven of 12 counties with FAW collected in the FAW traps. These counties were Dallam (59 and 139 moths), Deaf Smith (94 and 166 moths), Gray (43 and 109 moths), Hartley (90 moth), Potter (1 moth), Randall (369 and 78 moths), and Sherman (135 and 180 moths). Dr. Porter also has observed scattered feeding from larvae on single Bt and non-Bt refuge corn. We do not have any thresholds for FAW larval infestations in whorl stage corn or grain sorghum and little information on effective insecticide control options. But, Dr. Porter had good FAW results last year on whorl stage grain sorghum with Prevathon, active ingredient rynaxypyr, which is a product from DuPont. Also, good control was achieved when tank mixed with Asana. At this time we do not have any data for this product in whorl stage corn. This product has the same active ingredient as Coragen which is labeled on field corn, sweet corn, seed corn, and popcorn for control of corn earworm, Beet armyworm, European corn borer, and Fall armyworm. But, Prevathon has a label PENDING (not yet approved) for field corn, popcorn, and seed corn. NOTE, *Prevathon is not labeled for sorghum*.

An interesting occurrence with the FAW traps was that the FAW pheromone lure was an attractant for Wheat head armyworm (WHA). There were just as many or more WHA in the FAW traps as there were FAW moths. And, surprisingly, only WHA moths were captured in the FAW traps in Moore County. Individuals should watch for WHA larvae developing in wheat fields that are not yet ready to harvest.

Whorl damage from Fall armyworm

Fall Armyworm

Wheat head armyworm moth (right) and larva on wheat head. Photo of larvae by Monti Vandiver

Spider mites and Thrips in Corn and Cotton


Spider mites on cotton leaf

problems. If you decide to treat these early mite infestations in corn, the current preventative miticides do not have systemic activity and will only protect the leaves which are sprayed. So, any subsequent growth will not be protected from a later mite infestation.

In Cotton, we do not have an established action threshold for spider mites on seedling cotton. So decisions to treat will have to be based on leaf injury and the buildup of mite densities. Because of the potent damage of thrips on cotton a foliar treatment for thrips may be needed, but the treatment could cause spider mite populations to explode. So, check fields after an application to see what the mites are doing.

Thrips in cotton continue to be a concern because with the winds and drought conditions the plants have been struggling to grow. By now the seed treatment is most likely losing its effectiveness. If immature thrips are readily found when scouting then the seed treatment is no longer effective. The immature thrips can be difficult to see because they get in the folds of the leaf and or near the petiole. Foliar applications of acephate will provide good control, but the residual activity will last approximately 5 days. Damage can occur quickly, so scout fields often.