



PANHANDLE PEST UPDATE



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Moth Pest Survey

Weekly trap catches are posted on the Texas AgriLife Research and Extension Center website (<http://amarillo.tamu.edu/amarillo-center-programs/extension-entomology/insects/>).

Southwestern corn borer (SWCB) trap catches are increasing in Dallam, Moore, and Sherman counties while numbers have declined sharply in Deaf Smith County (Graph on page 2). It is very interesting that SWCB activity was so early and high in Deaf Smith County compared to the other counties. This could be what we refer to as a suicide emergence of moths from the overwintering generation? It will be interesting to see if we get high moth activity again later in the season. For Dallam, Moore, and Sherman counties, scouting for egg laying activity of the

Spider mites in Corn

Spider mites continue to be found in most fields. These hot temperatures and dry conditions are ideal for spider mite development. Continue watching the mite populations to see if mite densities are expanding or decreasing. Thrips migrating from wheat have kept mites in check in some fields, but not in all fields. It will not be long before corn begins to tassel and when it does mite populations increase at a greater rate than during the vegetative growth stages. Also, the rate at which mites increases in greater when plants are under intermediate water stress. So, unless conditions change we could be in for a bad spider mite year.

There are two spider mite species which are our



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moths may be advisable in fields planted to corn hybrids without Bt genes for lepidopteran pests. Eggs are laid on the upper and lower surface of the expanded leaves in the whorl. The percentage of plants infested by the 1st generation egg lay is generally low (< 5%) and control applications are seldom required. And, the high temperatures may be detrimental to egg and small larvae survival.

Western Bean Cutworm (WBC) activity has increased in traps in Hartley, Moore, Randal, and Sherman Counties (Graph on page 2). The number of WBC is not very many yet, but the activity is starting earlier

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major pests of corn on the Texas High Plains. They are the Banks grass mite (*Oligonychus pratensis* Banks) and the two spotted spider mite (*Tetranychus urtica* Koch). Both are very similar in appearance and their damage to corn is identical. We tend to find two spotted spider mites later in the season when corn begins filling grain, but we can have both mites present at the same time. The two spotted spider mite is inherently more difficult to control than the Banks grass mite, which is related to resistance development. But, field control failures can occur for both mites due to factors such as poor spray coverage, and adverse climatic and stress conditions.

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Moth Pest Survey

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than we have seen the last two years.

Fall armyworm moths continue to be present, but numbers are relatively low across the Panhandle.

I had mentioned in the last newsletter that the FAW traps had also attracted large numbers of Wheat head armyworm (WHA) moths in traps from Dallam, Deaf Smith, Hartley, Gray, Hutchinson, Moore, and Sherman counties. But, this week there are very few WHA moths being trapped.

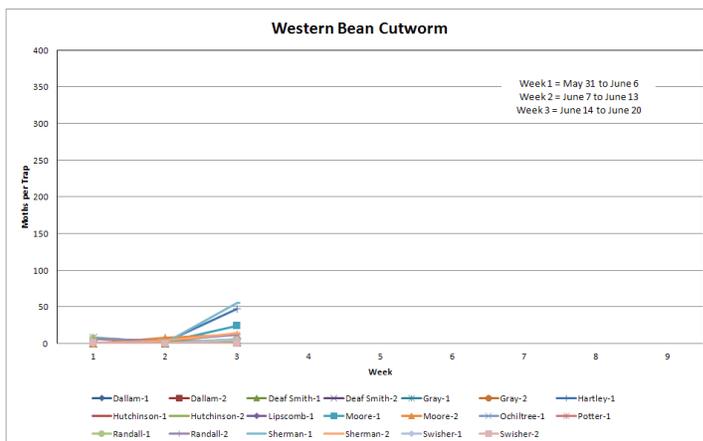
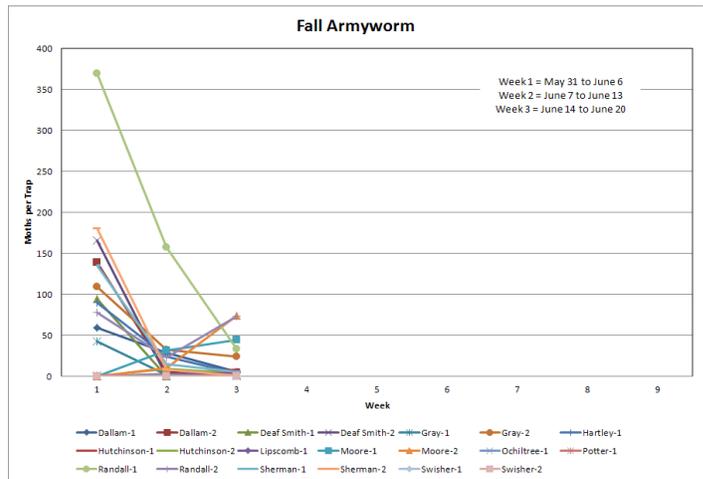
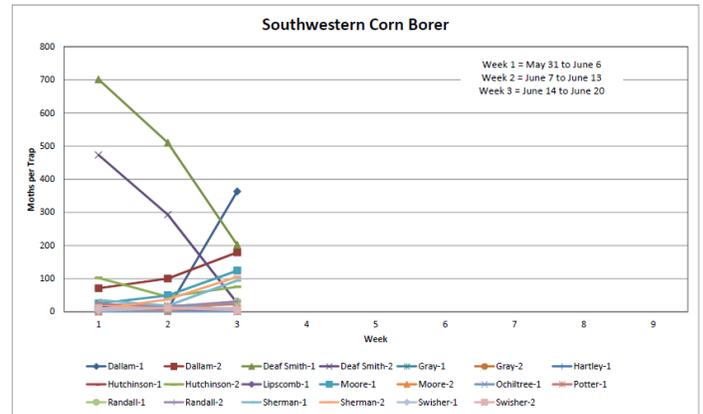
Spider mites in Corn

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We are beginning to find different mite predators feeding on the mite colonies. The predators seen are both the minute pirate bug nymphs and adults, spiders, and the stethorus lady beetle (aka mite destroyer). I have not come across any predatory mites or the six spotted thrips, which are excellent predators of mites. All of these predators will be crucial this year in keeping spider mite populations under control. Try to conserve these natural enemies as best you can by selecting insecticides and miticides which are safer on beneficial insects.



Minute Pirate Bug (Adult, left, and two nymphs).



Southwestern corn borer moth



Western Bean Cutworm