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Be On the Watch for Fall Armyworms in Pastures and Wheat

Tom A. Royer, Extension Entomologist



Department of Entomology, University of Nebraska-Lincoln

Fall armyworms are caterpillars that directly damage sorghum heads, fescue and bermudagrass pastures, seedling wheat, soybean and residential lawns. We have received reports of fall armyworm buildups in north eastern Texas and south central Oklahoma. In addition, I have seen some very severe fall armyworm infestations in numerous sorghum fields in Oklahoma over the past 3-4 weeks. For the most part, these fall armyworms have just about completed their lifecycle, but such large and noticeable

numbers increase the potential that we will see another generation that could cause some serious problems for grass pastures, seedling wheat and lawns.

Female fall armyworm moths lay eggs at night on grasses or other plants that hatch a few days after being laid. One female can lay up to 1000 eggs. Caterpillars grow through six molts before becoming mature, increasing in size after each molt. Mature fall armyworms measure 1½ inches long with a body color that ranges from green, to brown to black and have a prominent inverted white "y" on their head. However, you need to detect them long before they reach mature size. Small larvae do not eat through the leaf tissue, but instead, scrape off all of the green tissue and leave a clear membrane that gives the leaf a "window pane" appearance. Larger larvae feed voraciously and can completely consume leaf tissue.

To scout for fall armyworm, examine plants in several locations within the field or pasture. Examine plants along the field margin as well as in the interior. Look for "window paned" leaves and count all sizes of larvae. I suggest a treatment threshold in seedling wheat is two or three ½ inch-long larvae per linear foot in wheat and three or four ½ inch-long larvae per square foot in pasture. Dr. Kathy Flanders of Auburn University suggests bending a wire coat hanger into a hoop. The hoop covers about 2/3 of a square foot, so a threshold in pasture would be an average of two or three ½ inch-long larvae per hoop sample.

It is crucial that you target smaller caterpillars (1/2 inches or less) for control for two reasons. First, the caterpillars don't cause really severe damage until they reach an inch long, and secondly, smaller caterpillars are much more susceptible to insecticide control than larger caterpillars.



Lets hope that fall armyworm problems don't rear their ugly heads with the inverted "Y", but keep vigilant just in case. In any case, we will not be out of the woods for a fall armyworm outbreak until we get a good killing frost.

Insecticides labeled for fall armyworm control in Pastures

Insecticide Formulation	Rate of Product/Acre	Comments
Confirm 2F	8 fl oz	0 day waiting period for grazing or harvest.
Lannate ^R LV	0.75 to 3 pt	For Bermudagrass pasture ONLY. 7 day waiting period for grazing, 3 day waiting period for harvest.
Lannate ^R SP	0.25 to 0.5 lb	
Malathion	2 pt	0 day waiting period for grazing or harvest.
Sevin 80S	1.25 to 1.875 lb	For improved pasture only: do not apply more than 2 applications per season and not more than once every 14 days. Sevin label states a 14 day waiting period for grazing or harvest.
Sevin 80 WSP	1.25 to 1.875 lb	
Sevin 4F	2 to 3 pt	
Sevin XLR Plus	2 to 3 pt	

Insecticides labeled for fall armyworm control in Wheat

Insecticide Formulation	Rate of Product/Acre	Comments
Lannate LV	0.75 to 1.5 pt	10 day waiting period for grazing, 7 day waiting period for harvest.
Lannate ^R SP	0.25 to 0.5 lb	
Lorsban 4E (Warhawk, Whirlwind)	1 pt	14 day waiting period for grazing, 28 day waiting period for harvest. 2 applications per season.
Methyl parathion 4E	1.5 pt	15 day waiting period for grazing or harvest. Temperatures should be above 50 ^o for application.
Mustang MAX	3.2 to 4.0 fl oz	14 day waiting period for grazing or harvest.
Proaxis 0.5 CS	2.56 to 3.84 fl oz	Wheat, wheat hay, triticale. 30 day waiting period for grazing or harvest.
Prolex 1.25 CS	1.02 to 1.54 fl oz	
Sevin XLR (Carbaryl)	1 to 1.5 qt Check label for rates	21 day waiting period for harvest, apply when temperatures are expected to exceed 55 ^o .
Tracer	1.5 to 3 fl oz	14 day waiting period for grazing, 21 day waiting period for harvest.
Warrior 1CS	2.56 to 3.84 fl oz	Wheat, wheat hay, and triticale. 7 day waiting period for grazing and 30 day waiting period for harvest. Do not apply more than 0.06 lb ai./season.

Dr. Richard Grantham
Director, Plant Disease and Insect Diagnostic Laboratory

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