Pest e-alerts

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Don't Put Greenbugs Out of Mind Unless You Have "Glanced" at Your Wheat Field

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Our own ever vigilant Area Agronomist Roger Gribble has been saying grace over numerous wheat fields in Northwest Oklahoma and reported greenbug pressure is mounting in NW Oklahoma, particularly around the Fairview area. This seems a bit later than we usually see greenbugs increasing, but our extended cold winter coupled with drier conditions in NW Oklahoma means growers should check their fields for rising greenbug pressure. Fortunately, OSU and USDA research entomologists from Stillwater conducted research that we used to develop a simple sampling method for greenbugs called ***Glance 'n Go***, which can be found on the web within the Greenbug Management Decision Support Tool, http://www.entoplp.okstate.edu/gbweb/.

Go the Greenbug Management Support Tool and select the Greenbug Calculator. By answering a few simple questions, you can compute an economic threshold for controlling greenbugs. This threshold is based on the estimated cost of treating the field and the estimated price of wheat. Once a threshold is determined, you can print a scouting form, take it to a field and record your sampling results. The form will help you to decide if the field needs to be treatment for greenbugs. There are several things that make ***Glance 'n Go*** a good way to make such a decision. You only have to "Glance" at a tiller to see if it has greenbugs (no counting greenbug numbers). You can make a decision to treat "on the Go" because you stop sampling once a decision is reached (no set number of samples). Finally, you can account for the activity of the greenbug's most important natural enemy, *Lysiphlebus testaceipes*.

Lysiphlebus is a tiny parasitic wasp that attacks cereal aphids. It can be very effective at controlling an outbreak. In fact, this wasp is so effective, that we incorporated their activity in our ***Glance 'n Go*** sampling forms. When scouting with the ***Glance 'n Go*** system, keep a running count of tillers that have aphid mummies and a running count of tillers that are infested with one or more greenbugs. After each set of 5 stops, the form directs you to look at your total number of infested tillers and tillers with mummies. If there is enough mummy activity, you will be directed to stop sampling and DON'T TREAT, even if you have exceeded the treatment threshold for greenbugs! Why? Because research showed that at that level of parasitism, almost all of the healthy-looking greenbugs have been "sentenced to death" and will be ghosts within 3-5 days. If they have received their "sentence" you can save the cost of an unnecessary insecticide application.

Treatment thresholds should probably fall around 3-5 greenbugs per stem, but make sure you are using the Spring (January-May) form, not the Fall (September-December) form. If a field needs to be treated, check with Current Report CR-7194, "Management of Insect and Mite Pests in Small Grains".

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