



Pest e-alerts



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Fall Armyworm Notice: Check Your Wheat Early and Often!

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Our new Extension small grains specialist, Dr. David Marburger has experienced lots of “firsts” since arriving in Oklahoma, from tornado warnings to earthquakes. Yesterday he was introduced to another “first” that seems to be developing into an annual fall challenge for Oklahoma wheat producers. He received photos of a newly-planted wheat field, at the 2-leaf stage, that was “drying up” even though it had plenty of soil moisture. The producer told him that the wheat plants went from green to dried up over a 2-day period. A closer examination revealed the leaves had been stripped of their green tissue, and there were lots of small caterpillars “loitering around”.



The culprit: fall armyworms. Fall armyworms have been very active this summer and fall. They showed up early and in large numbers this growing season. As wheat planting progresses, our producers need to check fields regularly after seedling emergence. Scout for fall armyworms by examining plants in several (5 or more) locations in the field. They are most active in the morning or late afternoon.

Look for “window paned” leaves and count all sizes of larvae. Examine plants along the field margin as well as in the interior, because they sometimes move in from road ditches and weedy areas. The suggested treatment threshold is 2-3 larvae per linear foot of row in wheat with active feeding. Numerous insecticides are registered for control, but they are much more susceptible when caterpillars are small. We won’t get relief from fall armyworms until we get a killing frost, so keep vigilant!



Consult the newly updated OSU Fact Sheets [CR-7194 Management of Insect and Mite Pests of Small Grains](#) for control suggestions.

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