Pest e-alerts

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## Chinch Bugs Showing Up in Sorghum

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Ph.D. student Jessica Lindenmayer reported finding chinch bugs in several of the sorghum fields as she was scouting this week. Historically, chinch bugs tended to build up in wheat, at which time the nymphs would migrate to nearby planted fields of corn or sorghum and mature into adults. More recently, we are seeing more injury from the second generation of chinch bugs, which are now laying eggs. Most of the corn has now "outgrown" the potential for injury from this generation of chinch bugs. For sorghum, it is a different story. As few as 2-3 chinch bugs can kill a seedling sorghum plant, but it will take 5-10 bugs per plant to kill larger plants. Large numbers of chinch bugs can cause weakened stalks and predispose plants to lodging. Plants under drought stress are more prone to injury and are more difficult to control with insecticides.

Adult chinch bug (3/16 inch)

Fig 2. Chinch bug nymphs

Fig 3: Chinch bug damage

There are several options for control of chinch bugs. Sorghum seed treated with a systemic insecticide such as clothianidin, imadacloprid, or thiamethoxam will "slow them down" for about three weeks and give the sorghum plant a good head start.

For rescue management of chinch bugs, apply an insecticide as a border treatment or full field treatment. Treat the whole field if the infestation is widespread. Chinch bugs are very difficult to control, especially as the sorghum gets taller. For sorghum that is seedling to V-7 growth stage, consider banding the spray over the row. For taller plants, ground applications using 20 to 30 gallons of water per acre and directed at the base of the plant provide the best option for control. Products registered to control chinch bug are listed in EPP-7170 "Management of Insect and Mite Pests in Sorghum" which can be obtained from your local County Extension Office.

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