



# Pest e-alerts



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*Entomology and Plant Pathology, Oklahoma State University  
127 Noble Research Center, Stillwater, OK 74078  
405.744.5527*

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## **Alfalfa Insect Update - 18 Feb 2019**

Kelly Seuhs, Associate Extension Specialist  
Department of Entomology and Plant Pathology  
Oklahoma State University

While we remain in the midst of a winter blast, spring green up will be upon us before we know it. In an ongoing effort to identify potential alfalfa weevil and aphid populations over the upcoming season, we look at several factors (especially weather) that could contribute to increased or decreased populations of these pests.

So far in 2019, we've experienced fairly cold temperatures with some areas dipping into the low-teens. Ice has also been observed throughout a good portion of the state on multiple occasions. However, compared to last year, we have not experience single digit to below zero temperatures which can cause egg mortality. With enough warm days, increasing temperatures have already spiked degree days to 150 or more in numerous counties in the far southern half of the state with several others approaching that mark (Table 1).

In regard to alfalfa weevil populations, 150 degree-days represents the level that serves as an indicator for growers and consultants to begin scouting for larvae. In most years, an early egg hatch would mean a relatively quick demise for larvae and continued suppression of aphid pressure since extremely cold temperatures, with the addition of ice/snow or cold rains can usually still be expected throughout February. The short-term Mesonet forecast has indicated Oklahoma may be in for close to or slightly below average temperatures and slightly above average precipitation for the next few weeks.

If the above forecast materializes and a continuation of cooler temperatures prevail a somewhat normal weevil season could evolve with a rise in weevil populations being closer to the late March timeframe. However, if we start to have days with increasing temperatures degree days can accumulate quickly. The best way to keep informed of what is going on in your area is to remain diligent about monitoring Mesonet degree day information, entomology Pest e-alerts, contact your local extension educator, and continued scouting. Dr. Mulder and I were on the road last week collecting AW egg samples from around the state. Once the samples are processed I will provide that information in the next report. While the data we collect can't conclusively predict the severity of the upcoming season, this information can help give a snapshot of the current



activity in areas of collection throughout the state. We'll continue to monitor the weather, provide egg population data, and future information as it becomes available.

Table 1. Degree Day accumulations for 10 counties throughout the state as of 2-15-2019.

County:	Degree Days
Alfalfa	86
Comanche	120
Garvin	130
Kingfisher	83
Kiowa	106
Major	98
Payne	96
Pottawatomie	101
Rogers	76
Tillman	144

#### **Disease and Insect Diagnostic Laboratory**

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