

David Hallauer
District Extension Agent, Crops & Soils

Fall Armyworm Update

A couple weeks ago I shared information on our fall armyworm trapping network and the moths we had been capturing. Fortunately, moth numbers have held steady or declined – but that doesn't mean scouting isn't necessary, particularly as reports of feeding injury has increased.

Scouting can be difficult when larvae are small. Start by looking for windowpane injury a result of tiny larvae chewing off a single layer of the plant's cells but not through the entire leaf. If you see 25-30 percent of plants exhibiting windowpane injury, increase scouting frequency. Larvae are often found hiding around the plant's base during the warmer parts of the day. As larvae grow, feeding will increase with damage becoming more apparent.

Scout recently harvested fields first. Armyworms prefer tender growth and this young growth is also the least able to handle feeding pressure, requiring attention to new regrowth first. Damage will continue until larvae reach maturity and move on to their next growth stage.

If you find damage, but no larvae, continue scouting. Stands in good condition with good growing conditions (adequate moisture/moderate temperatures) will likely respond with new growth. It may be slower to regrow than we'd like, but with luck, adults will move on to lay eggs elsewhere and plants can recover. That new growth will still be susceptible to future feeding, however, and may tolerate less damage after another feeding than it did the first. Watch it closely.

We're fortunate across many parts of the area to have decent moisture with good post-harvest regrowth allowing for stands to tolerate at least *some* level of feeding. It doesn't hurt to keep an eye on stands, however, particularly if moisture conditions deteriorate.

Pre-Plant Wheat School

Wheat may not be a huge part of our NEK crop rotations, but under the right circumstances, it can fit economically *and* be a fit as a rotation crop as well. Our August 28th Pre-Plant Wheat School is going to focus on where that 'fit' might be as we host K-State Wheat Specialist Dr. Romulo Lollato and Plant Pathologist Dr. Kelsey Anderson Onofre for a rapid-fire morning focused on new research in wheat production.

We'll kick off at 9:30 Wednesday, August 28th at the Woolsoncroft Events Center at 1615 Branch St in Seneca with presentations by Dr. Lollato, Dr. Onofre plus a report on a local wheat variety trial from Ag Partners Agronomist Kevin Bergman. We'll hit on a lot of topics in a short time and get you on your way before noon.

If you can attend, please drop us a line to let us know by Monday, August 26th so we can plan for refreshments courtesy of Ag Partners Coop. You can do so by calling the Seneca Office of the Meadowlark Extension District at (785) 336-2184 or e-mailing me at dhallaue@ksu.edu.