

## **Scout for Crop Pests**

Once we made it past the heat and humidity of early August, temperatures in the 70s and 80s combined with off and on rain showers have made for really good crop growing conditions. I know I sure won't complain about the more comfortable temperatures. In addition to the good growing conditions for crops, pest infestation still seems to be relatively low at this point. However, now is the time that we typically start seeing more a rise in infestations.

**Soybean Pests:** Podworms (corn earworms/sorghum headworms) are just starting to move into soybeans from sorghum as the sorghum gets past the soft dough stage. Thus, as the soybeans are in the reproductive stages, with new succulent pods being added to the plants, these larvae, plus adult bean leaf beetles and possibly stink bugs, may start feeding on them, which can impact yield pretty quickly. Therefore, using a drop cloth and vigorously shaking the plants over it to count the bugs that fall on it is highly recommended to quantify the pests present, which is necessary to determine management options.

Also, the results of *Dectes* stem borer tunneling is becoming visible as scattered petioles start to die. Most of the larvae sampled were still relatively small i.e., probably only 1/4 - 1/3 grown.

**Sorghum Pests:** Much disparity in sorghum development exists throughout north central and south central Kansas, mostly due to weather-caused delays in planting. So, there are many different levels of "worms" infesting this sorghum from whorl stage to some that is already soft dough stage. Therefore, there are also different stages of "headworms" from small 2<sup>nd</sup> instar larvae to almost mature 5<sup>th</sup> instar larvae. Sampling needs to be initiated as soon as plants start flowering to determine infestation levels.

Additionally, don't forget about chinch bugs. These don't usually affect plants as much under good growing conditions, which we have had for the most part, but there are still significant populations present which may affect plants if growing conditions become more stressful.

Somerfield across the state are seeing an infestation of cattail caterpillars. These caterpillars often get confused for corn ear worms or fall armyworms. They are not the same with the difference being cattail caterpillars are leaf feeders and not part of any "headworm" complex.

With this time of year and the stage of crop production among us, you're encouraged to make the time to scout your fields and look for crop pests that could cause you problems. Take the time to enjoy the beautiful weather and keep an eye on those crops!