

Fighting insect pests

New technology making producer's life much easier

As the heat of summer is upon us, so is the pressure of insect pests for the area ag producers. Observing numerous airplanes flying low over the crop fields has not been uncommon.

Once again Phil Sloderbeck, K-State Extension Southwest entomology specialist, shares the following reports this week on some of the crop pests.

New technology can be amazing. When one reads about "Cucurbitacin" the thought of cucumbers comes to mind. Also referred to as "watermelon juice," Phil shares how some of that new technology can also trick the insect pests.

Adult western Corn Rootworm (WCR) activity has picked up the last few days, and currently in Garden City we have a mixture of larvae, pupae and adults. If you are utilizing an adult spray

program, then treatment should be applied before females start laying eggs. This generally occurs 10 to 12 days after first emergence. That time has arrived and many of the cornfields in the area are already being treated. But many more will need treatment in the next few days.

Bob Bowling a former insect diagnostician at K-State, reports that some people have a misconception about the way products containing cucurbitacin (Invite and Cidetrac) is detected by WCR. Cucurbitacin is not an attractant. Rather, it is a motion arrestant/feeding stimulant. The beetle only detects cucurbitacin by coming into direct contact with it.

The insect has sense receptors (like taste buds) on its legs that will "taste" cucurbitacin as the beetle walks across this chemical. These sense receptors tell the beetle to stop moving and start

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Whitey Whitehill

County Agriculture Extension Agent

feeding. Therefore these products should not be sprayed in strips thinking it will lure beetles from untreated areas to treated areas of the field.

First generation Corn Borer pressure in the area is in the midst of the second generation moth flights. Producers should continue to scout fields closely to determine if infestations reach levels that require measures.

Spider Mite populations are generally low. However, hot temperatures and the reproductive stage of corn will offer ideal conditions for a rapid increase in mite populations over the next few days. Spraying for Adult Rootworm Beetles with certain insecticides could also be a factor that will cause mites to flare. Thus, mites will need to be watched closely for the next few weeks.