

Sorghum Pests

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Sorghum

- Chinch bugs
- Sugarcane Rootstock Weevil
- Grasshoppers
- “Ragworms”
- “Headworms”
- Aphids
- Sorghum midge

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Chinch Bugs

Mating chinch bugs

Chinch bug nymphs on sorghum – NC KS

Sorghum starting to lodge under hot/dry conditions and large numbers of chinch bugs

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Chinch bugs

- Chinch bug control options:

Avoid planting sorghum next to wheat

Timing – plant sorghum after wheat harvest

Insecticides – seed treatment vs. foliar application

Native Bunchgrasses, Pasture Grasses

WINTER

FALL

WINTER Wheat, Other Small Grains

SPRING

Corn, Sorghum

SUMMER

Various stages of chinch bug nymphs

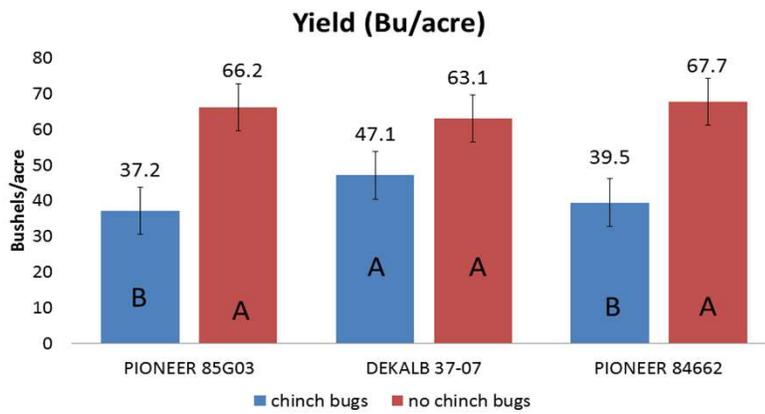
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Chinch bugs infested starting at flowering. The sorghum head on the left of each pair was untreated. Head on right treated 2 times



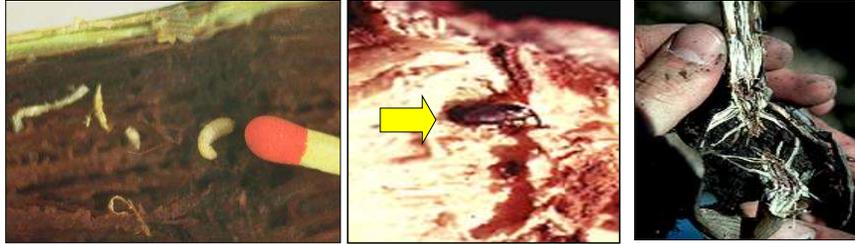
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Whitworth/Davis. 2014. Dk Co. Natural Infestation at heading.
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Sugarcane Rootstock Weevil



- Native to Kansas
- Can attack sorghum, field and sweet corn
- May cause lodging especially under dry conditions

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Grasshoppers

- Scout borders in early summer to prevent migration into sorghum
- 15-20 nymphs / sq yd in **borders** or 5-8 nymphs / sq yd in **field** may justify treatment



Foliar Damage



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'Ragged' Foliar Feeding on Young Sorghum



Typical of:

- Fall armyworm
- Corn earworm



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Fall Armyworm

(4 spots on last segment)



Corn Earworm

'Ragworms'

- Showy feeding by worms in the whorl
- Does not impact yield
- Contact insecticides are not recommended

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“Headworms”



- Plants vulnerable from bloom to milk stage
- Check sorghum when it begins to head.
- 1-2 worms per head can justify control.
- **Generally consider 5% loss per worm per head.**

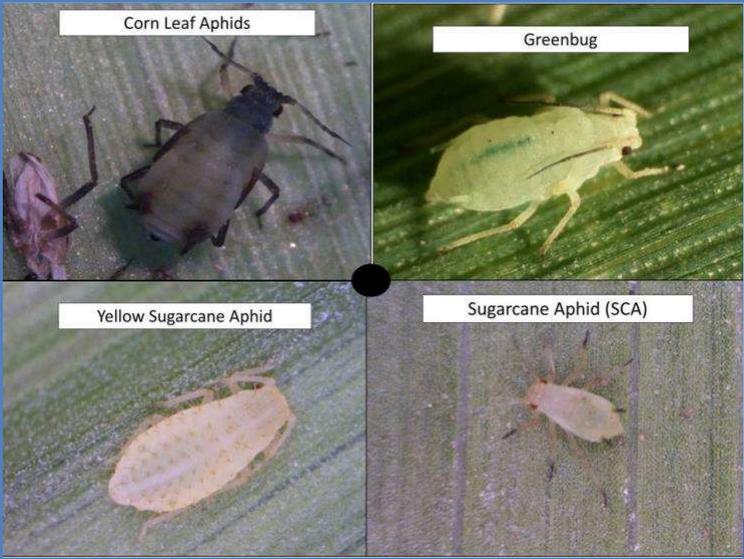
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Significant populations somewhere in the state most years



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Aphids



Corn leaf aphids



Corn Leaf aphids common most years and provide food source for beneficials



Sugarcane Aphid Damage - 2016

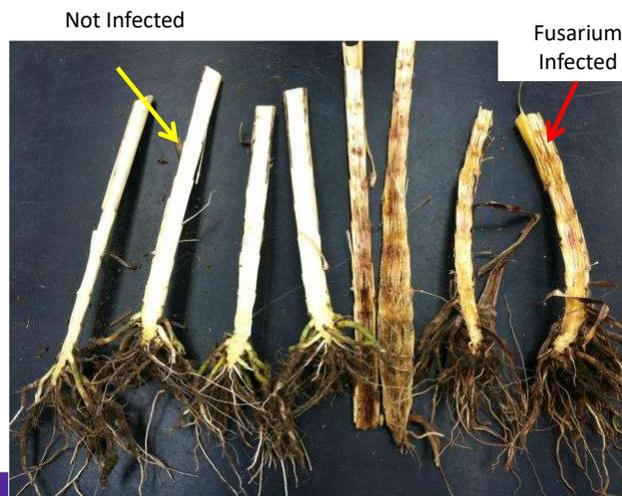
- Produce LARGE quantities of honeydew, can cause problems during harvest
- Heavy feeding causes plants to dry down rapidly
- Weakened stems = plant lodging prior to harvest



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Sugarcane Aphid Damage - 2016

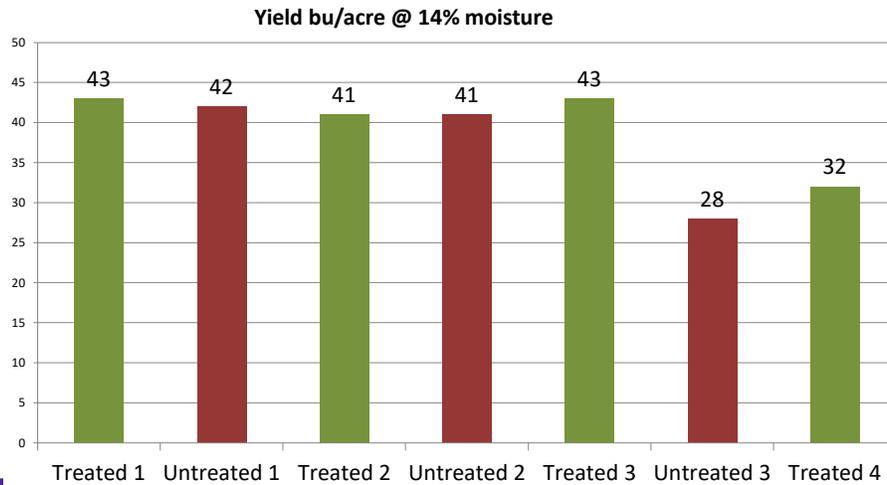
- Fusarium infected stalks from the lodged area (not treated)
- Non-infected stalks from the Sivanto treated area



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Photo courtesy of Judy O'Mara

Gypsum, KS – sprayed for SCA on 13 Sept. 2016 with Sivanto Prime@4oz/a + Interlock@2oz/a



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Data provided by Tom Maxwell Saline Co. Ag. Agent

SCA – Since 2019-controlled by beneficials or Something?



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SORGHUM MIDGE

- Do not overwinter in KS – subtropical insect
- Last generation diapause where larvae fed – between bracts
- Occasional pest in Kansas
 - Normally confined to SE and SC parts of the state
 - Numbers usually too low to detect or to justify insecticide treatment in Kansas
- Usually noticed after fly emergence because of remaining pupal cases



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SORGHUM MIDGE DAMAGE

- Detection occurs after damage - “blasted” heads (small malformed kernels)
- Late planted sorghum most at risk in KS
- Will not cause economic damage after flowering (pollination)
- Sorghum heads must pollinate = developing kernels are what the larvae feed on



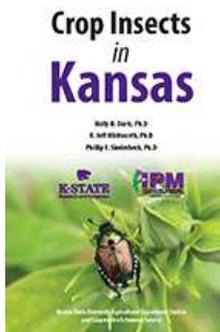
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- Significant #'s of blasted heads some years
- We have been, and are in the process of, examining “blasted” heads to determine midge vs. other damage
- If consistent across the field, probably due to environmental conditions
- NO midge damage positively identified yet



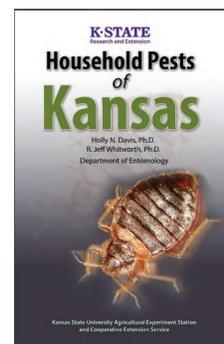
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Available:



Identification guides

- Biology
- Damage/ Thresholds
- Management options



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Available from the KSRE Bookstore: <https://www.bookstore.ksre.ksu.edu/>

For more info, please visit: <http://entomology.k-state.edu/extension/>

Questions?



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