

Forage Update: Fall Armyworms, Bermudagrass Stem Maggots and Sugarcane Aphids

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Three of our major forage pests are at population levels sufficient to cause damage across many regions of the state. Fall armyworm (FAW) populations are well above threshold in multiple areas of the state (Figure 1). We are seeing caterpillars of uniform size and mixed sizes that indicate overlapping generations. Population levels of over 20 FAW per square foot are not uncommon. FAW larvae are continuing to hatch around the state and may be around for weeks (Figure 2).



Fig. 1. FAW collected in 10 sweeps on July 30, 2024. Collection and photo courtesy of Lance Blythe.

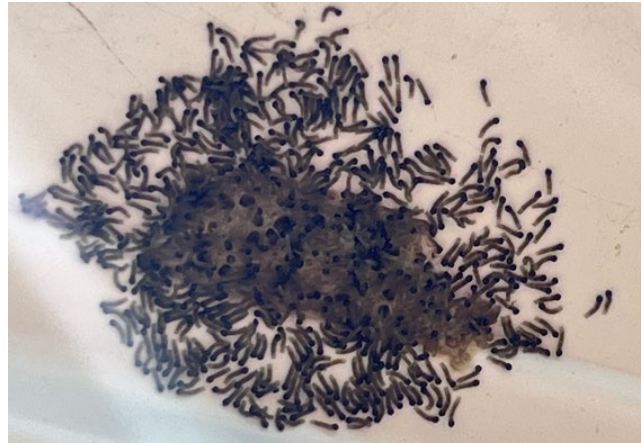


Fig. 2. Newly hatched FAW. Photo and collection courtesy of Lance Blythe.

Efficacy of the lambda-cyhalothrin/diflubenzuron (Dimilin 2L) tank mix against FAW has been variable. Good control has occurred in NE Arkansas while some farms in central and south Arkansas are seeing less than adequate control (Figure 3). Because of the low cost the tank mix of lambda-cyhalothrin/Dimilin tank mix is a very popular option. However, when less than adequate control is achieved, other options with residual activity are available – such as

chlorantraniliprole, chlorantraniliprole/lambda-chalothrin and methoxyfenozide. Applications with chlorantraniliprole (Vantacor and existing stocks of Prevathon) and Besiege (chlorantraniliprole and lambda-cyhalothrin) are showing good efficacy this year. I'm not seeing many hayfields receiving Intrepid (methoxyfenozide) applications but those that have are showing a good level of efficacy. Because we are also battling bermudagrass stem maggots (BSM), Besiege would be a good option to use when bermudagrass is infested with both FAW and bermudagrass stem maggots a week to ten days following harvest. Remember if you see readily apparent BSM damage just before cutting, an application of a pyrethroid such as lambda-cyhalothrin is warranted 7 to 10 days after cutting. Last month's Pest Management News included an article on FAW and BSM if more detail is needed.



Fig. 3. Live FAW collected in 25 sweeps 2 days following a lambda-cyhalothrin only application. Photo and collection courtesy of Kevin Lawson.

Some sorghum-sudangrass hybrids are hosting sugarcane aphid populations at levels requiring treatment. Insecticide options that are available and effective for controlling SCA are Sivanto (flupyradifurone) and Transform (sulfoxaflor). When yield justifies harvest, early harvest is an option.