



# PLANT DISEASE AND INSECT ADVISORY

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## Alfalfa Weevil Egg Populations in 2008

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Alfalfa  
Alfalfa Weevil (Lycyda Fuscicornis)  
Photo By: unknown (image source: University of Kentucky) 4400003 ImageID: 9395  
Kansas State University  
Great Plains Diagnostic Network  
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Alfalfa weevil egg populations for January are located in the attached table. In addition, degree days through January 16, 2008 are presented in the last column. For the purposes of comparison, January egg populations and viability of those eggs for the previous three years are also depicted in the table. Viability measurements for this year's samples are still being processed; however, only three locations (Payne, Kay, and Washita Counties) had sufficient egg numbers for testing. Moderately low numbers of eggs were recovered in all counties. In 2008, degree days through January 16 are averaging 56.8 across the ten sample sites. This represents around twice the number of degree days accumulated last year at this time and egg numbers are still down considerably from the two years previous to last year (2005, 2006). Populations in 2007 were at their lowest for at least the last decade.

In an attempt to decipher what may have happened to alfalfa weevil populations over the last couple of years, we looked at the

percentage of normal precipitation in each of the ten counties sampled this year. From January 2007 through January 2008, all of the ten counties experienced 80% or above normal precipitation. These increases in precipitation may account for the extremely low numbers of alfalfa weevil eggs recovered this year.

Remember, as far as alfalfa weevil populations are concerned, 150 degree-days represent the level that serves as an indicator for growers and consultants to begin scouting for larvae. So far this year, very few early (suicidal) emerging larvae were present in our samples. Any of these early emerging larvae will likely be killed by current and/or ensuing cold weather events. Continued and persistent cold with ice and/or rainfall will further enhance mortality. In contrast, blankets of snow may provide insulation for both weevils and aphids. This last spell of weather, with light periods of ice and freezing rain did not provide protection to insects exposed to these

