



Pest e-alerts



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Sugarcane Aphids Are Infesting Sorghum in Oklahoma

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Last evening, I met with Tim Reh, a crop consultant with Crop Quest in Grady County. He indicated that he had already found 2-3 sorghum fields that had exceeded treatment thresholds. The field we were looking at was infested, but had not yet reached the treatment threshold. In addition, Rick Kochenower, national sales agronomist with Sorghum Partners reported that fields were treated in Caddo and Jackson counties. While infestations have not “exploded” all over Oklahoma yet, this aphid infested significant acres of sorghum last year, so growers need to be checking their fields.

Several aphids infest sorghum. The sugarcane aphid is light yellow, with dark, paired “tailpipes” called cornicles and dark “feet” called tarsi. The yellow sugarcane aphid is bright yellow with many hairs on its body and no extended cornicles. The greenbug is lime green with a darker green stripe down the middle of its back and has dark tarsi and only the tips of the cornicles are black; the corn leaf aphid is olive green with a dark head and legs.

Sugarcane aphid



Yellow sugarcane aphid



Greenbug



Corn leaf aphid





Sugarcane aphid infestations start out as small colonies but can quickly increase. As they feed, they produce large amounts of sticky honeydew that can coat the leaf surfaces of the plant. The honeydew supports the growth of a black fungus called sooty mold. This aphid causes direct yield loss, but the large amounts of honeydew that covers the leaves and seed heads can interfere with harvest by clogging the combine and slowing it from moving material through the machine. The current recommendation for control of sugarcane aphid is to treat if 30-40% of plants are infested (an infested plant has at least one colony of aphids). Results from our insecticide trial in 2014 saved 10-18 bushels per acre by controlling this aphid.

Consult [CR-7170 Management of Insect and Mite Pests in Sorghum](#) for suggestions on other registered insecticides. Sugarcane aphid has proven difficult to control with insecticides. Two new insecticides are registered for control of sugarcane aphid that proved effective in various insecticide trials in 2014. Sivanto received a Section 2ee registration that allows producers to apply it at 4-7 fl oz per acre. Oklahoma obtained a Section 18 Emergency Exemption label for the use of Transform WG that is in effect until October 31, 2015. It is registered for application at 0.75-1.5 oz./acre.

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Finally, I strongly urge producers to check their fields and scout accurately. Do not spray until suggested thresholds are reached, and apply the spray with the highest gallonage possible (5 or more gallons/acre by air, or 10 or more gallons/acre by ground) as spraying too early and with inadequate coverage may require a second application from aphid recolonization.

Dr. Richard Grantham - Director, Plant Disease and Insect Diagnostic Laboratory

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