

Panhandle Pest Update



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Spider mites and upcoming Weather Forecasts

The last few days there has been some heavy rains scattered all across the Texas High Plains. And, our meteorologists are predicting more rain and much cooler temperatures this week. If these conditions do occur, there is a good probability of a natural fungal pathogen, *Neozygites* spp., infecting spider mites in all crops, but especially corn. We typically begin to see the inoculation of spider mites with fungal spores when we have an extended period of high humidities (80% plus) and temperatures around or below 85° F for 8-10 hours a day. Heavy dews in the morning are often associated with these conditions.



Healthy spider mite in lower left corner to and infected dead carcass in upper right corner, Photo: Karin Westrum

Gary Dick and Lawrent Bushman, previous KSU entomologists, at Garden City, Kansas surveyed corn fields in Kansas and a grain sorghum field near Lubbock, Texas in the early 1990's. Their study showed the Banks grass mite collected were infected with *Neozygites adjarica*. A later study reported this fungal pathogen also infested twospotted spider mites.

All life stages of the spider mites are infected and mite mortality can occur in 1 to 3 days after infection. Field infestations can be cleaned up within a week's time.

If you were planning to spray and the spray plane has not gotten to the field, re-scout your fields to see if mite infestations have been controlled by this fungal pathogen.

Update on Moth Trapping

The last of July and two to three weeks in August is typically when southwestern corn borer (SWCB) moths are most active. However, this year we are starting out with very low numbers of SWCB moths in county with moth traps, except moth number in Deaf Smith (trapping locations) and Parmer Counties (John David Gonzales, IPM Extension Agent, light traps) are beginning to increase (See SWCB moth graphs). In Deaf Smith county the high numbers of SWCB moths were in one or two trap locations in the county. Mr. Gonzales



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