

Kansas State University Extension Entomology Newsletter

For Agribusinesses, Applicators, Consultants, Extension Personnel & Homeowners

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September 24, 2021 No 23

Fall armyworm infestations in early-planted wheat in central Kansas
Stinkbugs
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Fall armyworm infestations in early-planted wheat in central Kansas

There have been some heavy infestations of fall armyworms in early-planted wheat in Ellis County, with some plantings completely destroyed, and the larvae trying to finish up on the pigweeds. This is a very asynchronous, late generation of fall armyworm, with most larvae now almost mature, but some still quite small. Treatment will not be justified at this point. The best recommendation is to just wait until worms have finished feeding, recalling that larvae can “march” across to new fields after killing plants. If larvae are still active in adjacent fields, it will be best to wait until later in the planting window (up to 2nd week of October for Ellis County). The emerging moths should migrate south without laying any more eggs.

There have been many reports across the Midwest of large fall armyworm populations damaging crops, lawns and turf, so they are having a good year. There were some reports of true armyworms also. The color of these caterpillars is highly variable; the dark color depends on melanin deposition, which can increase at low temperatures, and the intensity of bright colors depends on plant pigments obtained in the diet. To help distinguish between these two worms, refer to the features identified in photos shown below.

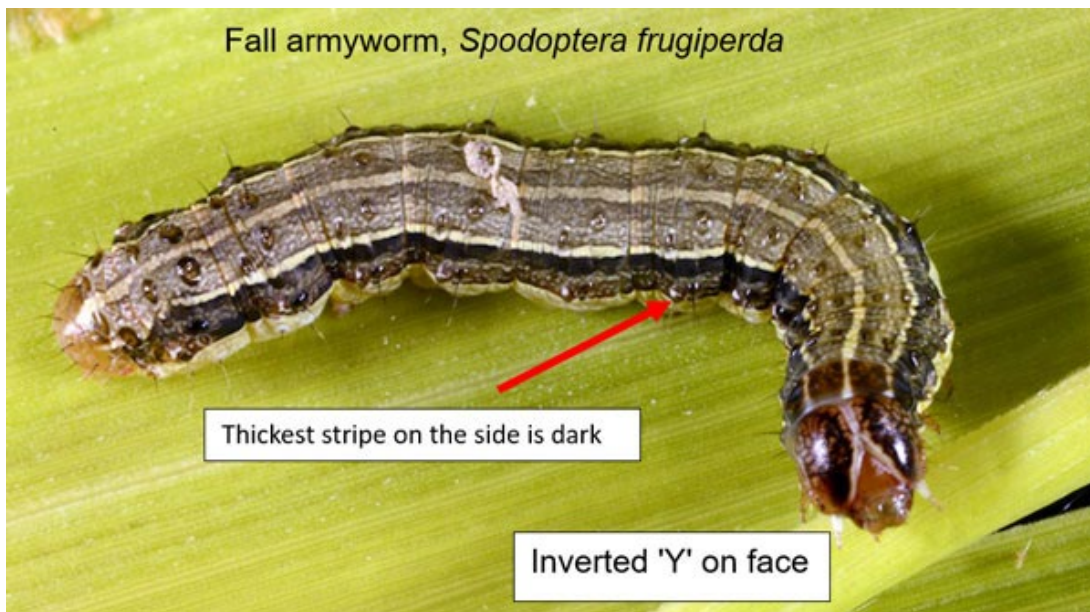


Figure 1. Fall armyworm showing key identifying features. Photo by J. Obermeyer.

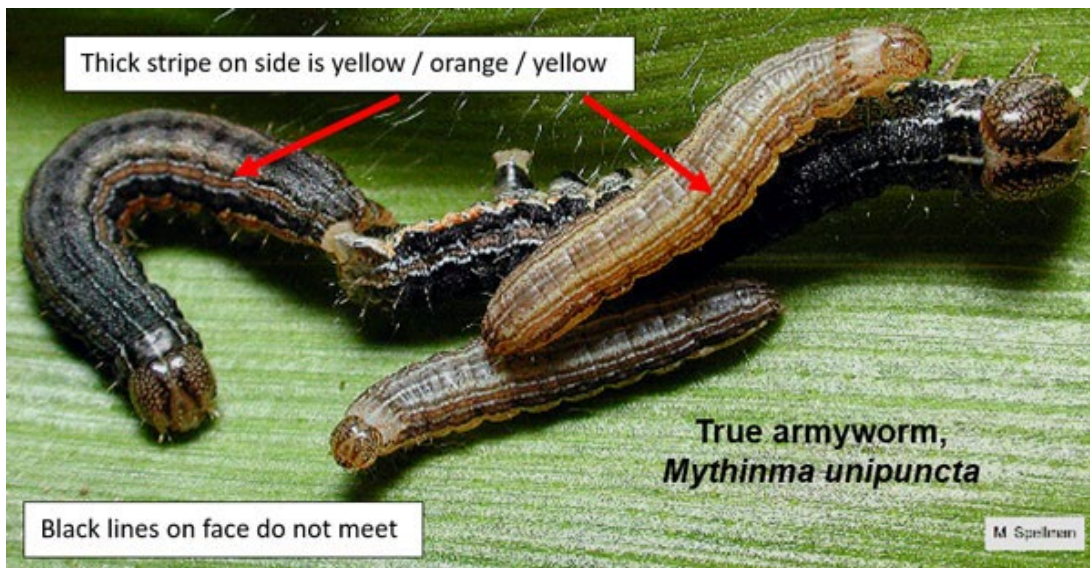


Figure 2. True armyworm with key identifying features. Photo by M. Spellman.

J.P. Michaud, Entomologist – Agricultural Research Center, Hays, KS

Stinkbugs

Stinkbugs are still quite common this time of year and many are still nymphs (see pic. 1). Fortunately, most crops should be past the stage that might be susceptible to stinkbugs. Soybeans are probably the crop of most concern relative to stinkbugs. However, they seem to be very general feeders--sucking juice out of just about any juicy, succulent plant. Their relatively long, but somewhat fragile, mouthparts are used to pierce into plants to suck the fluid that they feed on. This is usually while the plants are actively growing and thus the epidermis is relatively tender or the mouthparts can't penetrate. Thus, stinkbugs should not be a problem now relative to soybean yield, unless the soybeans are still in the early reproductive stages.



Picture 1: Stink Bug Nymph (pic by Cayden Wyckoff)

Jeff Whitworth – Field Crops

Grasshoppers

Grasshoppers continue to be quite numerous in some alfalfa fields, and late-planted soybeans (see pic. 2). As these crops senesce or dry down, these grasshoppers sometimes move into wheat fields when the newly planted wheat starts to germinate where they can be a real hindrance to establishing a good stand.



Adult Grasshopper (there are many different kinds currently in the fields – this is a Differential Grasshopper)
(pic by Cayden Wyckoff)

Jeff Whitworth – Field Crops

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Bug Joke of the Week

Q: What is a caterpillar scared of?

A: A dogerpillar!

Sharon Schroll

HOME

Sincerely,

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Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station and Cooperative Extension Service

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