

## Extension entomologist: Producers should start scouting for grasshoppers

June 21 2010

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(PhysOrg.com) -- Several western South Dakota counties have reported grasshopper hatchings and producers in these areas are reminded to start scouting for these pests.

That's according to South Dakota Cooperative Extension Entomologist Mike Catangui, who said Extension Service, South Dakota Department of Agriculture, and USDA efforts to scout grasshoppers continue, and that producers may want to prepare for possible control options if scouting dictates they are necessary.

“The hatch has started in earnest in counties including Haakon, northern Jackson, Fall River, and elsewhere,” Catangui said. “We are receiving reports from a number of counties, from our Extension offices, and from producers.”

Catangui said the South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service and the USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service in Pierre are collaborating on the effort to keep producers informed not only of [grasshopper](#) hatchings, but also of their possible options in terms of control.

Bruce Helbig, South Dakota Plant Health Director with the USDA, said he and his staff, including Amy Mesman, domestic program coordinator with APHIS, have hosted meetings with and fielded calls from producers who are reporting grasshoppers on rangeland.

“What we found in our meetings is that our surveys of pasture and rangeland did not show high numbers of grasshoppers,” Helbig said. “Producers who reported unusually high numbers of grasshoppers found most of them near water, along creek beds, and near rivers. Those types of hot spots are not uncommon.”

Mesman said the main idea the USDA shared with producers was to keep eyes on their pastures. “We have great grass out there this year, due to good moisture, so it’s not unlikely that we’ll see more grasshoppers,” Mesman said. “Their numbers may be a little higher than normal, but so too is the grass abundance, so in the end, it may be less of a threat to the grazing potential of pasture.”

Helbig said his service’s primary role is to assist in the monitoring and control of insect pests on rangeland. He said he appreciates the role of the Extension Service because they can assist the owners of smaller acreages and crop producers to better address control options and strategies for their individual situations.

Division Director Kevin Fridley of the South Dakota Department of Agriculture said overall, western South Dakota is in excellent shape in terms of overall grass and forage due to spring rains, but that the potential exists for problems.

“We encourage producers to scout early and scout often, especially as summer continues,” said Fridley. “As things dry out, we may see hoppers moving from dried grass to green crops or other available greenery. Overall, we have some hot spots, but no statewide recommendation for action, short of scouting.”

Adele Harty, Extension Livestock Educator in Haakon/Jackson counties, said her scouting and reports she has received show a mix of grasshopper numbers.

“As far as the conditions in Haakon County and in northern Jackson County, there are areas where the grasshoppers are very high in number,” Harty said. “The farther north, the smaller the numbers, but this is likely due to the hatch just beginning in those areas.”

Harty said producers from the Midland area reported large numbers of grasshoppers per square yard a week ago, with most of these being about one-quarter to one-half inch in length.

“A Cottonwood area producer called me with concerns about the number of grasshoppers in rangeland surrounding a field where they plan to plant millet,” Harty said. “He stated that the grass was moving with the number of grasshoppers and is concerned that if he plants the millet, the grasshoppers are going to eat the seedlings.”

Maurice Lemke, Extension Livestock Educator in Ziebach County, reported specific numbers of parts of his county, some that indicate control measures may be needed.

“We have the velvet and velvet-striped grasshoppers that over-winter at numbers five times past that of the threshold on the north side of the Cheyenne River,” Lemke said. “The South Dakota Department of Agriculture and APHIS met last Thursday evening at the ranch of Andy and Joy Fischer with area ranchers in an effort to discuss control options available from the USDA.”

Lemke said that the reports from Ziebach County found more than 50 grasshoppers per square yard. He said he continues to work with local staffers from the Farm Services Agency, Natural Resources Conservation Service, the Cheyenne River Sioux Tribe, and the Bureau of Indian Affairs.

Farther west, reports have also been mixed. Fall River County Extension

Range Management Educator Dusty Jager said cooler spring weather has helped to reduce grasshopper numbers to some extent.

“We have been seeing nymph grasshoppers in Fall River County, and producers have indicated that we had some overwintering grasshoppers, especially in the Edgemont and Dewey areas,” Jager said. “We held a meeting in Edgemont to discuss life cycle and thresholds that was well attended, and we do anticipate a fairly large hatch again this year.”

Provided by South Dakota State University

Citation: Extension entomologist: Producers should start scouting for grasshoppers (2010, June 21) retrieved 29 January 2023 from <https://phys.org/news/2010-06-extension-entomologist-scouting-grasshoppers.html>

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