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For Immediate Release

Views With Van

Thus far in 2018 the sugarcane aphid (SCA) has not been found as of yet on sorghum in Kansas. There have been a few confirmed reports of the sugarcane aphid in Oklahoma and Texas, which means the aphid is slowly making its way north. What can we expect this season? It's impossible to know for sure at this time. Infestations in Kansas in 2017 were sporadic, and most issues were late season, but in 2016, sugarcane aphids were a significant problem on grain sorghum in Kansas, Texas, Oklahoma, and most southern states. It is advisable to begin scouting while sorghum is still in the pre-boot stage. Early detection is key to the management of this pest, but treatments should be based on established thresholds. One, heavily infested plant does not equal a yield loss. Plants are vulnerable to infestation by SCA at any growth stage, but Kansas sorghum is most at risk from boot stage onward. The ability of sugarcane aphid to overwinter on Johnsongrass and re-sprouting sorghum stubble represents challenges to the management of this pest in more southerly regions. In 2017, the SCA overwintered in south central Texas and northern Mexico.

Infestations begin when swarms of winged aphids settle in a field and begin to establish colonies. Established colonies of wingless aphids quickly become large and crowded, which causes winged forms to develop, until the final generation is exclusively winged once again. Thus, the trend will be for Kansas to receive SCA only after infestations to the south mature and produce winged migrants. In 2017, large flights of winged sugarcane aphid arrived in Kansas

somewhat later than in 2016 and a smaller area of the state was affected, despite cold wet spring weather in the south that delayed the aphids initially. It remains to be seen how the 2018 season will develop, but given the slow march across Texas and Oklahoma, we expect to see something similar to last year.

To sample a field; start off by once a week, walk 25 feet into the field and examine plants along 50 feet of row. If honeydew is present, look for SCA on the underside of a leaf above the honeydew. Inspect the underside of leaves from the upper and lower canopy from 15–20 plants per location. Sample each side of the field as well as sites near Johnsongrass and tall mutant plants. Check at least 4 locations per field for a total 4 locations per field for a total of 60-80 plants. If SCA are found on lower or mid-canopy leaves, begin twice-a-week scouting.

Estimate the % of infested plants with large amounts of SCA honeydew (shiny, sticky substance on leaf surface) to help time foliar insecticides for SCA control on sorghum. There are a few stages of the sorghum insect threshold. With the Boot stage, 20% of the plants are infested with localized areas of heavy honeydew and established aphid colonies. With the Soft Dough stage, 30% of the plants are infested with localized areas of heavy honeydew and established aphid colonies.

For ongoing current information on SCA in Kansas, check out the myFields web site often in the coming weeks and months:

<https://www.myfields.info/pests/sugarcane-aphid>