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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Barley Thrips found in Central North Dakota

According to NDSU Entomologist Janet Knodel it is now time to scout for Barley thrips. She states that "Barley thrips are a pest problem in central North Dakota again! Barley thrips have been found in Kidder, Sheridan, Wells, Eddy, Foster and Pierce Counties. Some fields have high numbers of Barley thrips (>20 thrips per stem) while other fields are still low in numbers (1-3 thrips/stem). It seems early for Barley thrips with the cool spring. However, the recent hot weather has been pushing insect development as well as crop development. Typically, hot dry weather conditions favor Barley thrips development that may result in crop losses."

Knodel gives the following description of the pest: "Barley thrips are small dark brown to black insects about 1 to 1.8 mm long. Females have feathery wings while males are wingless. Immature larvae are wingless, pale yellow, white or green with red eyespots. Larvae are difficult to see due to their light, almost transparent color and extremely small size. Adult and immature thrips have a long, narrow body shape."

To identify damage done by Barley thrips Knodel says to look for "a whitened or bleached appearance with gooseneck-shaped stem and heads under severe pressures." Intensive feeding at the beginning of head formation produces small, shriveled grains. Often there is no seed development at the top and bottom of the head and intermediate grains are shriveled. When thrips feeding is severe on the flag leaf, kernels do not fill properly and seed weight is reduced."

Knodel states that the best time to scout for Barley thrips is from flag leaf to heading. Barley thrips can be found by unrolling the flag leaf away from the stem. Populations will probably be higher at the field edges.

Knodel recommends the following treatment schedule:

"Once the barley heads, the insect damage is done and NO insecticide treatment is advised. The only registered insecticide for Barley thrips control in North Dakota is methyl parathion 4 EC at 4-6 fl oz per acre (do not enter treated fields within 48 hours after application). Other insecticides approved for use on barley but do NOT have Barley thrips listed on the label include: Warrior II (lambda-cyhalothrin), malathion, Lannate (methomyl), and PennCap-M (methyl parathion). It is legal to apply an insecticide if it is labeled for use in the crop; however, if the target pest is not listed for that crop, efficacy is not implied by the manufacturer and growers who choose to use the product assume their own liability for any unsatisfactory performance. Although many growers want to wait to tank-mix the insecticide with a fungicide for scab control at Feekes 10.5 (head fully emerged), I do NOT recommend waiting for the optimal timing of a fungicide application for scab control in barley. This is too late for effective Barley thrips control and the damage/yield loss is already done by then."

Knodel also extends a warning to "please be aware of any bee hives located near your barley fields as insecticides, especially methyl parathion, are extremely toxic to honey bees. Notify your local beekeepers if you intend to spray, so the bee hive can be moved to another area before spraying. A list of honey beekeepers in North Dakota is available on the North Dakota Department of Agriculture website."

<http://www.agdepartment.com/PDFFiles/2009BeekeepersList.pdf>

More information on Barley Thrips can be found on the NDSU Extension Website at the following link:

<http://www.ag.ndsu.edu/procrop/bar/thrips.htm>