

**A LITTLE BIT COUNTRY
WARREN FROELICH
NDSU EXTENSION SERVICE
WILLIAMS COUNTY**

Weevil Could Threaten Second Cutting

There have been years when the alfalfa weevil has devastated this forage crop, almost always the first cutting. This year development of the first cutting of alfalfa has been progressing quite well and appears to be ahead of the growing degree days (heat units) necessary for the development of the alfalfa weevil. However, such delay in weevil development could pose a threat to the second cutting.

The alfalfa weevil adults overwinter in plant debris, woodlots and ditches. The adult beetle is about one-fourth inch long, brown in color with a dark stripe on its back. As temperatures warm, adults migrate to alfalfa fields to lay eggs. The eggs hatch into small alfalfa weevil larvae (worms) that are slate colored. As larvae mature, their color changes to bright green with a white line running down their back, a black head capsule and are about three-eighths inch long.

By using degree days with a base of 48°F, the life stages and development of the alfalfa weevil can be predicted. Approximately 300 degree days are required to complete the egg stage. As of June 1, the Williston Research Center charted 272 degree days, the highest in this region.

The range of degree day accumulations can be accessed on the NDAWN website which can be reached in our web page www.ag.ndsu.edu/williamscountyextension

Major feeding by the alfalfa weevil larvae will occur from 430 to 595 degree days. At greater than 600 growing degree days feeding normally stops and adults emerge.

Management of weevil infested alfalfa stands depends on when the infestation occurs. If the infestation occurs relatively late, when the alfalfa has reached 20 to 25

inches in height, consider taking an early harvest. Small larvae, those less than one-fourth inch in length, will drop to the soil and generally die if the soil is dry. If the infestation occurs early, when alfalfa is 10 to 15 inches in height, chemical treatment may be necessary. Insecticide treatment is recommended if two live larvae per stem occur at this stage and/or 35 to 40 percent of the plants are showing tip feeding. In general, if alfalfa is 7 – 10 days out from harvest and 35 to 40 percent tip feeding is present, an insecticide treatment is recommended.

Remember to check the pre-harvest interval as these restrictions vary according to the insecticide used and the rate applied. Other factors to consider when selecting an insecticide are its price, potential hazards to honey bees and whether or not it is a restricted use insecticide. To minimize damage to honey bees and native pollinators, apply insecticides during early morning or late evening when bees are back in the hive.

National Recession Influences Consumer Decisions

In the last decade, there has been considerable effort within the food industry to put a brand on products in an effort to sway consumers. This method of marketing has experienced a fair amount of success, but the national recession is having a negative impact on the meat industries' effort to build brand affinity.

According to the 2010 Power of Meat study, conducted by the Food Marketing Institute (FMI) and the American Meat Institute (AMI), more than seven in ten shoppers (74 percent) reported having no preference based on brand. Instead, the average American is shopping on price, looking for deals in store circulars and trying to save money with bulk purchases and value cuts.