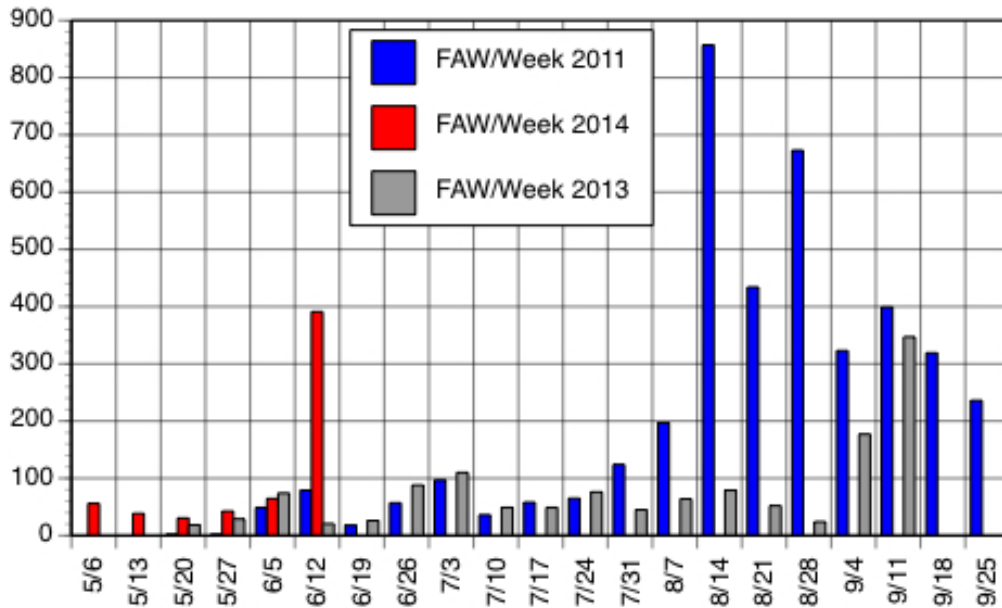


FOCUS on South Plains Agriculture

A newsletter from the Texas A&M AgriLife Research and Extension Center at Lubbock

Special Edition: Fall Armyworm Outbreak

2014 fall armyworm pheromone trap captures (moths per week) at Lubbock. 2011 was a high fall armyworm year.



The graph pretty much says it all as far as what is happening with fall armyworm, at least from Lubbock to Muleshoe. Trap captures increased dramatically on Sunday, June 8th and the numbers per night this week have not diminished at the Lubbock Extension Center. Hayden Hadley, our AgriLife employee in Muleshoe, is reporting 182 moths per trap per week; several times the average for this time of year. Our moth traps in Hale and Swisher counties were knocked down in a storm so we have no data from them, and Castro County has not reported numbers yet. Dr. Ed Bynum reports that his trapping network north of Amarillo is catching normal numbers, so it seems we may have a fall armyworm outbreak south of Amarillo.

Assuming these moths arrived on a storm front on Saturday and laid eggs, the first egg masses would have started hatching on Tuesday or Wednesday. That is exactly what we are seeing in Lubbock; large numbers of egg masses in corn, some of which have hatched and some of which are freshly laid. Egg laying is continuing and we now have many small larvae feeding on whorl stage corn and sorghum.

Whorl stage corn and sorghum can withstand at least 30 percent leaf damage before treatment is justified. However, high numbers of caterpillars can kill the growing point and this will lead to stunted plants. Crops at risk include corn, sorghum, pasture and some vegetables. All of our Bt corn should be able to protect itself from a whorl stage infestation.

Pyrethroid insecticides are not very effective on fall armyworm. Insecticide efficacy studies we conducted in the last few years indicate that Belt, Besiege and Prevathon can be effective if spray coverage is good. RPP



Typical fall armyworm feeding damage in non-Bt corn.

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