

Montana statewide Wheat Midge monitoring continues

By Dan Picard, WTARC Special Projects Coordinator

The State-wide Montana Wheat Midge Monitoring Project will be in full force again this June and July. Twenty eight MSU Extension agents, 6 MSU Ag Research Centers, growers, and consultants will place monitoring traps in spring wheat and durum fields this June to monitor for Wheat Midge. Orange Wheat Blossom Midge are now being called Wheat Midge to correspond to with terminology used by the Entomological Society of America. Wheat Midge may cause substantial yield losses when high populations are present and this project will allow growers to be proactive in regards to a relatively new pest to much of Montana.

Wheat Midge traps are comprised of a plastic trap, a sticky liner, and a pheromone lure that will attract the male wheat midge. Researchers monitor where the midge populations are present in the state and determine if they are spreading to counties not currently known to have the pest. Growers also use traps to check for the level of midge presence in order to determine if fields need to be scouted. Producers use infield scouting techniques to determine if an insecticide application is warranted.

Wheat Midge counts are reported on the Montana Pest-web. This provides everyone with a real time picture of the Wheat Midge infestation at each trap location reported throughout the state. Growers can access this free site at <http://pestweb.montana.edu> and view trap count data from 2014, 2015 and daily reports from cooperators this year.

Wheat Midge may cause heavy losses in fields when they are present at economic levels and the crop is in a vulnerable stage. More information on Wheat Midge, management strategies, and current trap counts can be found at the Pest-web site mentioned. Growers can also contact their local MSU Extension agent for more information.

The Montana Wheat Midge Monitoring Project is headed up by Brooke Bohannon and Dr. Bob Stougaard, Northwestern Ag Research Center near Kalispell and Dan Picard and Dr. Gadi V. P. Reddy at Western Ag Research Center near Conrad. The Montana Wheat and Barley Committee provides funding for the monitoring project.

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