

Alfalfa weevil

The alfalfa weevil *Hypera postica*

Gyllenhal is an **early season** pest that significantly affects the yield from first cuttings of alfalfa. In early spring adult beetles (Figure 1a) begin depositing eggs (Figure 1b) on young (3-4 inch tall) alfalfa. Larvae hatch from eggs and begin feeding. The late instar larvae are the most destructive (Figure 1c). Larvae pupate in cocoons (Figure 1d). Adults may be seen later in the season, but are not known to cause much damage.

Assessing

Sweep netting for larvae is the recommended approach for sampling for threshold levels. 20 larvae obtained from 20 sweeps (Figure 2) suggests a problem may be present and further measures should be taken.

Figure 2. The Sweep net should carry an arc of 180° for each of twenty sweeps. One step forward should be taken between sweeps. The net should remain below the top of the canopy for the entire sweep. 20+ larvae warrants control measures.

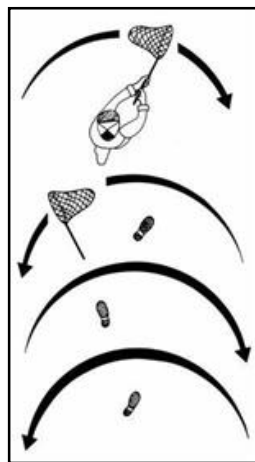


Figure 1. a) Alfalfa weevil adults, b) eggs, c) larva, d) pupa

Control

Chemical control and early cutting are recommended when damaging levels of population are observed. Grazing is another alternative that has shown success in reducing weevil populations.

Research

Pheromone based attractants may make monitoring easier in the future. While fungal biocontrol may reduce pest populations below threshold levels. These and other strategies are proposed by WTARC in the Spring of 2015.