

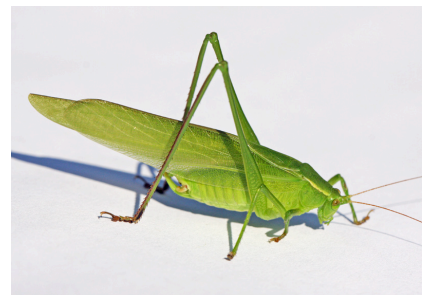


Managing Grasshoppers in Alfalfa

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According to John Gavloski - MAFRD Entomologist, there doesn't seem to be a lot of grasshopper problems this year. Possibly some of the wet humid weather may have affected them. As cereal crops ripen and harvest begins, sources of food for grasshoppers decrease making green alfalfa fields ideal to move into.

When scouting field edges this time of year, it should also be noted that high populations of katydid - green grasshoppers with long antennae - can be in some roadside areas. These are not crop pests. So sometimes it is deceiving judging grasshopper levels based on what is jumping if the grasshoppers cannot be seen. Taking a net and catching a representative sample can sometimes help assess if a potentially damaging grasshopper population is present.



Control begins with scouting. Exact economic thresholds can't be determined because of variables like value of the alfalfa and growth stage of both alfalfa and grasshopper. Still, if the grasshopper population in an established field is 7-12 grasshoppers per square meter throughout the field or 13-24 hoppers per square meter in field margins or roadsides, insecticides will probably be worthwhile. Newly planted fields may need treatment if the grasshopper population is at just half this level.

If Grasshopper numbers warrant spraying, treating just the outside 150 feet or so may be sufficient in these situations. However, if the entire field is already infested, it is usually best to harvest the alfalfa and then apply insecticide to protect the re-growth.

To reduce the cost and amount of insecticide used when treating an entire field, harvest the alfalfa but leave several small, uncut strips across the field. The remaining grasshoppers will quickly congregate in these strips, enabling you to only treat these smaller areas. Reduced area/agent treatments also have proven effective for alfalfa.

Carefully read and follow all label directions - pollinator protection should be considered if using foliar insecticides in a crop that is flowering. If treatment is necessary, it should be done as late in the day as necessary and, if possible, select an insecticide that is of lower risk to bees (the table on page 467 in the Guide to Crop Protection can help with this). Direct link for this resource is here:

<http://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/guides-and-publications/#gfcg>