

Issue 5 – June 19, 2025

Manitoba Crop Pest Update



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Summary

Insects: High levels of **alfalfa weevil** have been found in many alfalfa fields in the Interlake region, and to a lesser extent in the Central region, with some insecticide applications, and some alfalfa hay fields being cut early. Some foliar spraying for **flea beetles** in canola continued over the past week, although in many fields canola is now past the most susceptible stages. **Cutworms** can still be found at high levels in some fields, although cutworm concerns are diminishing as cutworms move into the pupal stage and crops advance. **Wireworms** have been noticed in some cereal and corn fields. Larvae of **cereal leaf beetles** have been noticed in some cereal fields, but only at low levels so far. Biological controls often help keep cereal leaf beetle to low levels. **Black flies** have been irritating cattle on pastures in some areas.

Weeds: Weed control operations continue across the province with windy conditions making spraying difficult. Cereal spraying is wrapping up while canola, soybean and corn continues to get treated. Dry conditions have limited weed growth and some fields are pretty clean and waiting for more weeds to grow before spraying. Second passes in canola, soys and corn should wait at least 10 days after initial sprays to let the crop recover and new weeds to grow.

Entomology

True Armyworms

When true armyworm moths arrive, they like to lay their eggs into lush grassy vegetation. Thus, cereal crops, particularly winter cereals and forage grasses, can sometimes end up with high levels of larvae. Some of the armyworm traps in the Interlake and Eastern regions have had some higher trap catches recently. Thus, it is good to be looking for armyworm larvae when scouting cereal and forage grass fields, particularly in these regions.

The following figure demonstrates some key features to look for to identify true armyworm larvae:



One of the questions that came in this week was how long does it take for armyworm eggs to hatch, and for them to go through their larval stages. This depends on temperature. The following table provides length of various stages

Report compiled by John Gavloski, Kim Brown
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at different temperatures. For our June temperatures, we are probably looking at 4 to 6 days for eggs to hatch, and roughly about three weeks to go through the six larval stages.

Duration (in days) of the immature stages of armyworm at constant temperatures

Stage	Temperature (°C)			
	17	21	25	29
Egg	10.4	6.0	4.0	3.3
Total Larval Stage	39.9	25.5	18.7	16.3
Instar 1	7.3	4.5	3.3	2.5
Instar 2	4.5	2.8	2.0	1.5
Instar 3	4.8	3.1	2.1	1.7
Instar 4	5.1	3.2	2.2	2.0
Instar 5	6.0	3.8	2.7	2.3
Instar 6	12.8	8.3	6.5	6.4
Pupa	24.0	16.5	11.5	8.8

The following factsheet contains more information on armyworm biology, scouting, and control:

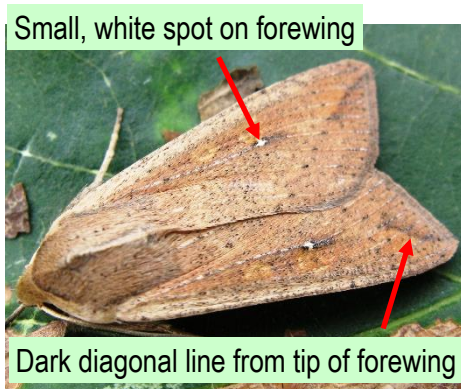
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/insects/pubs/armyworms-factsheet-revised-january2024.pdf>

Moth identification 101 – Knowing the moths in your traps

For those monitoring pheromone-baited traps for some of our moth species, note that moths other than what the trap is targeting sometimes end up in the trap, and at times in big numbers. One of the moths that sometimes ends up in traps for bertha armyworm or true armyworm this time of year is clover cutworm. At times we see quite high numbers of them in traps. The following photos will help you distinguish between clover cutworm, and bertha armyworm or true armyworm. If the moths have lost a lot of scales, figuring out what species they are can be tricky, but when a moth is definitely not one of the targeted species make sure not to count them with your catch.

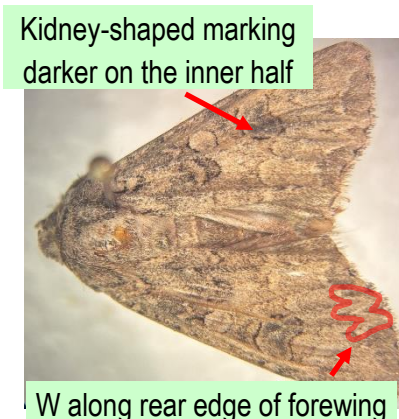
True Armyworm

(*Mythimna unipuncta*)



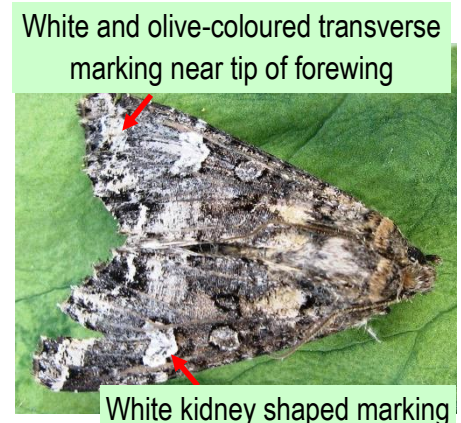
Clover Cutworm

(*Anarta trifoli*)



Bertha Armyworm

(*Mamestra configurata*)



Weeds

A few calls have come in over this weed – while the leaves are grass-like this is actually goatsbeard, a broadleaf weed. You'll see it mostly at the edges of the field, there may be a few plants here and there mostly on the headlands. You'll notice some bigger plants in the ditches with large yellow dandelion-like flowers, they only flower till noon then close up. A tell-tale sign is sap – pull off one of the grass-like leaves and you'll see white sticky sap on the stem. Grass weeds do not have sap.



Forecasts

Diamondback moth

A network of pheromone-baited traps are being monitored across Manitoba in May and June to determine how early and in what levels populations of diamondback moth occur. Diamondback moths have been found in 74 out of 89 traps that counts were reported from. There have been some higher cumulative counts in traps in the Northwest region, and moderate counts in the Central region, near Ste. Anne in the Eastern region, and near Fisher Branch in the Interlake regions. Counts have been low so far in the Southwest region.

The highest cumulative trap count so far is 253 from a trap north of Bowsman in the Northwest region. It is good to be looking for larvae of diamondback moth when scouting canola fields. Only trace amounts of larvae have been noticed so far.

Table 1. Highest cumulative counts of diamondback moth (*Plutella xylostella*) in pheromone-baited traps for five agricultural regions in Manitoba as of June 19, 2025.

Lower Risk: 0-25 Elevated Risk: 26-200 Higher level of moth catch: 200+

Region	Nearest Town	Trap Count
Northwest	North Bowsman	253
	Togo	120
	Bowsman	115
	West Bowsman	105
Southwest	Melita	21
	Whitehead	15
	Roseland	9
	Hartney	8
Central	Horndean	153
	Rosenfeld	116
	Carman	104
	Brunkild	86
Eastern	Ste. Anne	36
	Anola	8
	Tourond	4
	St. Malo	2
Interlake	Fisher Branch	29
	Pleasant Home	17
	Teulon	16
	Ledwyn, Warren	15

← Highest cumulative count

Highest trap counts of diamondback moth in each region and a monitoring summary are updated weekly on the Insect Page of the Manitoba Agriculture website at:

<https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/insects/pubs/diamondback-moth-trap-results.pdf>

Counts are normally updated every Thursday morning, but the website may be updated more frequently if higher counts come in.

True armyworms

Larvae of armyworms (*Mythimna unipuncta*), sometimes also called true armyworms, can cause significant feeding injury to cereals and forage grasses when levels are abundant. Adult moths of armyworms migrate to Manitoba in the spring from overwintering sites from the southern US. A network of pheromone-baited traps are being monitored from early-May until late-July to determine how early and in what levels populations of armyworms have arrive.

Counts have generally been low so far. Of the 28 traps with counts reported from so far, armyworms have been found in all traps.



Table 2. Highest cumulative counts of armyworms in pheromone-baited traps for agricultural regions in Manitoba as of June 18, 2025.

Region	Nearest Town	Trap Count
Southwest	Lyleton	37
	Brandon	20
	Pierson	8
	Melita	6
Central	Arnaud	2
	Ermerson	1
Eastern	New Bothwell	71
	Kleefeld	66
	Greenland	41
Interlake	Riverton	209
	Famnes	103
	Washow Bay	62
	Fisher Branch	57
	Zbaraz	31

← Highest cumulative count

Those scouting cereals and forage grasses in the Interlake and Eastern regions may want to check to see what armyworm larval levels are like in their fields. Armyworm larvae have been noticed, but so far there have been no reports of economic levels.

A map showing armyworm counts from Manitoba, Eastern Canada, and several Northeast U.S. states is available at:

<https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/7164d23d488246d198dcf7a07d8c9021/page/Home/?views=Welcome>.

Go to the link “TAW”. The “Play” button at the bottom can be set so the map automatically advances (click middle arrow), or set to “Stop” and the arrows at either side of the button used to go forward or backward a week at a time.

Identification Quiz

Agronomists submitted the following photos of aphids found in low levels on cereal crops over the past week. What species are these?



Photo by Jason Voogt



Photo by Sheila Elder

Answer: The aphid on the left is an oat-birdcherry aphid (*Rhopalosiphum padi*). Oat-birdcherry are dull olive-green coloured with a characteristic reddish-orange patch between and at the base of the cornicles. On wheat,

oat-birdcherry aphids prefer the stems and lower leaves. This aphid species is the main vector of barley yellow dwarf virus on the prairies.

The aphid on the right is a greenbug (*Schizaphis graminum*). Greenbugs are pale to bright green with a dark green stripe down the middle of the abdomen. The antennae are black and more than half the body length. The greenbug has saliva which is toxic to the plant and causes discoloration and brown spotting on the leaves it is feeding on. Highest concentrations of greenbugs are usually found on the lower surface of lower leaves.

Both species of aphids have legs and cornicles that are pale green with black tips. This can help distinguish them from the third species of aphid that commonly occurs on cereals, the English grain aphid, which has solid black cornicles and legs banded with areas of green and black.

The following factsheet provides more information on the biology, scouting, and control of aphids in cereals:
<https://www.gov.mb.ca/agriculture/crops/insects/pubs/aphids-on-cereals-factsheet-revised-november2023.pdf>

To **report observations** on insects, plant pathogens, or weeds that may be of interest or importance to farmers and agronomists in Manitoba, please send messages to one of the following Manitoba Agriculture Pest Management Specialists.

John Gavloski, Entomologist (204) 750-0594
Kim Brown, Weed Specialist (431) 344-0239