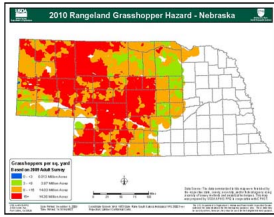


Ranchers gear up for potential grasshopper infestation

Written by Elizabeth Barrett

Wednesday, 02 June 2010 20:53 -



Dawson County ranchers could be battling grasshoppers later this summer.

State entomologists met with area landowners Friday afternoon in Broken Bow where they reported that the first wave of eggs have hatched.

Entomologists said some of the insects had been killed because of cool, spring weather, according to Custer County Extension educator Troy Walz who hosted the meeting.

“Landowners need to watch their pastures because a second hatch could come along anytime,” Walz said.

Concern about an infestation this year began last summer when United States Department of Agriculture officials conducted an annual survey of adult egg-laying grasshoppers and recorded high numbers on much of Nebraska rangeland.

That could make an infestation likely with the warm weather Nebraska has enjoyed recently.

Earlier Friday, Dawson County Extension educator Bruce Treffer said cool, wet weather can prevent newly hatched grasshoppers from feeding and they could die.

“But since grasshoppers hatch over an extended time, only some of the hatch may be affected,” Treffer said.


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ABOUT GRASSHOPPERS

- Grasshoppers can cause 85% of the damage damage anywhere but do so more frequently in areas with less than 25 inches of annual rainfall.
- About 50 species of grasshoppers are found in rangeland in Nebraska. However generally fewer than 10 species cause about 85% of the damage.
- Grasshoppers defoliate grasses by feeding on leaf and stem tissue and cutting off leaves or stems. High populations on rangeland can damage plants so severely that many grass plants will not recover.



(Source: Nebraska Institute of Agriculture and Natural Resources)

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