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2026 Fall Armyworm Trapping (Final?) Update

Last year at this time, moth numbers in our fall armyworm traps had dropped significantly after a summer of up and down numbers that mirrored the significant feeding we saw across the area. The numbers *did*, however, spike at season's end and while they didn't cause much additional feeding injury, they do underscore two things about this pest:

- 1) They aren't leaving until after frost
- 2) Monitoring is still encouraged

Fall Armyworms aren't known to overwinter in Kansas. The temperatures we see in winter are too low for their life stages to survive. Once we get freezing temperatures, they're not likely to be an issue for us. While we're inching closer to those temperatures every day – we're not there yet and that means the presence of fall armyworm and feeding from them is *still* possible. With any luck it won't be at significant levels – and moth trap numbers would support this – but it doesn't mean you won't find them or that isolated spots wouldn't see feeding.

Other Armyworm species *do* overwinter here and can sometimes be found feeding on vegetation late into the season. They're looking for green plant material and will continue their life cycle as long as temperatures (typically above the low 40's) are conducive.

With the ample regrowth many of our cool season grasses have exhibited during the latter part of the growing season, combined with lower feeding pressure than in recent years, it might be tempting to stop scouting. In most cases, that will likely be okay, with a couple of exceptions.

Also keep an eye on heavily grazed or late harvested stands with limited regrowth. These stands need good regrowth prior to dormancy and would suffer the most if feeding *does* occur.

Newly seeded crops should also be a focus. New alfalfa or grass seedings or newly established cover crops all need an opportunity to develop a root system. The young, tender growth in these types of stands won't tolerate feeding nearly as well as well-established stands.

Are we out of the woods for this year? We're still catching fall armyworm moths in our traps and other armyworm species are present as well – so not fully. That said, you can refocus the bulk of scouting efforts on new seedings or stands recovering from late haying or grazing.