

Spring 2018 IPM Update

This year, trusted entomologist Neil Hives has returned to the project and will be helping us out with IPM monitoring in our local area. We are currently in the process of setting up some local monitoring sites with sticky traps to catch any 'flying' invertebrate. In about a fortnights time, Neil will report in with results of what is found in the traps. In the meantime if you have any thoughts or suggestions to put forward to the IPM project for 2018 please let me know.

General expectations at the beginning of the 2018 broad acre cropping season – an IPM perspective. By Neil Hives.

Given the summer and early autumn that has been and gone it is now possible to give some likely general scenarios of what to expect with regards to several of the more common establishment pests that sometimes impact on crops. Five pests are considered here.

Slugs – by and large it has not been a favourable season for the survival of one key slug *Deroceras reticulatum* – grey field slug. Survivability of eggs and smaller juveniles from last spring will have been tested by the dry conditions unless they have had plenty of solid cover. As always on farm slug problems can be reduced or enhanced by management of stubbles and adjacent areas.

Deroceras will now be active on the back of some rainfall in recent weeks and the dewy mornings we see now. They won't be fully up to speed breeding and the like but out and about when they can along with *Lehmannia*. *Milax* will be waiting for more substantial rainfall events to trigger their activity. Shelter traps in place now will start to show up *Deroceras* activity.

European earwigs – will also become more obvious with the use of shelter traps if they are present as they tend to readily make use of these traps as well. Target suspected or known areas planned for susceptible crops to confirm earwig population sizes to help determine the likelihood or not of the need for control by seed dressings and/or baiting.

RLEM – along with BOM and *Balaustium* mites can be problem. Less so for RLEM/BOM in longer term cropped areas - apart from edges. RLEM will now be becoming more evident with conditions about right for them to hatch out from eggs laid last spring. Unfortunately the rather dry summer will have favoured a high survival rate of eggs. Wet February's and onwards tends to put downward pressure on survivability of eggs going into the next autumn.

Crickets – for some growers will have been quite evident over the last couple of months. Numbers can be quite high particularly in cracking soils. They may appear to look like being a problem at crop emergence but with a little rainfall and cooling conditions in April their numbers can dramatically drop off. They are one to watch and if possible leave chemical control options as late as possible with a reasonable chance that no chemical control will need to be undertaken in the end.

Aphids – as this season stands I suggest that aphid flight conditions have been quite favourable so far this month if they have been about. Yellow sticky traps in place around now and until favourable flight conditions ease will easily show if they are flying, their relative numbers and to the trained eye you can even see if green peach aphid is in the mix.

A number of other pests may also be encountered, some more in one area than others etc. and good year round monitoring and recording of pests across farms will always aid in good pest control decision making in IPM programs. Do you know the likely resident pest complex to be encountered in each of your paddocks this season? If not, start monitoring this season to deal with it now and to build a picture for next season. At the same time you will also build a picture of the resident beneficial invertebrates present across your farm.