

Dectes Stem Borer Invaded The Missouri Bootheel

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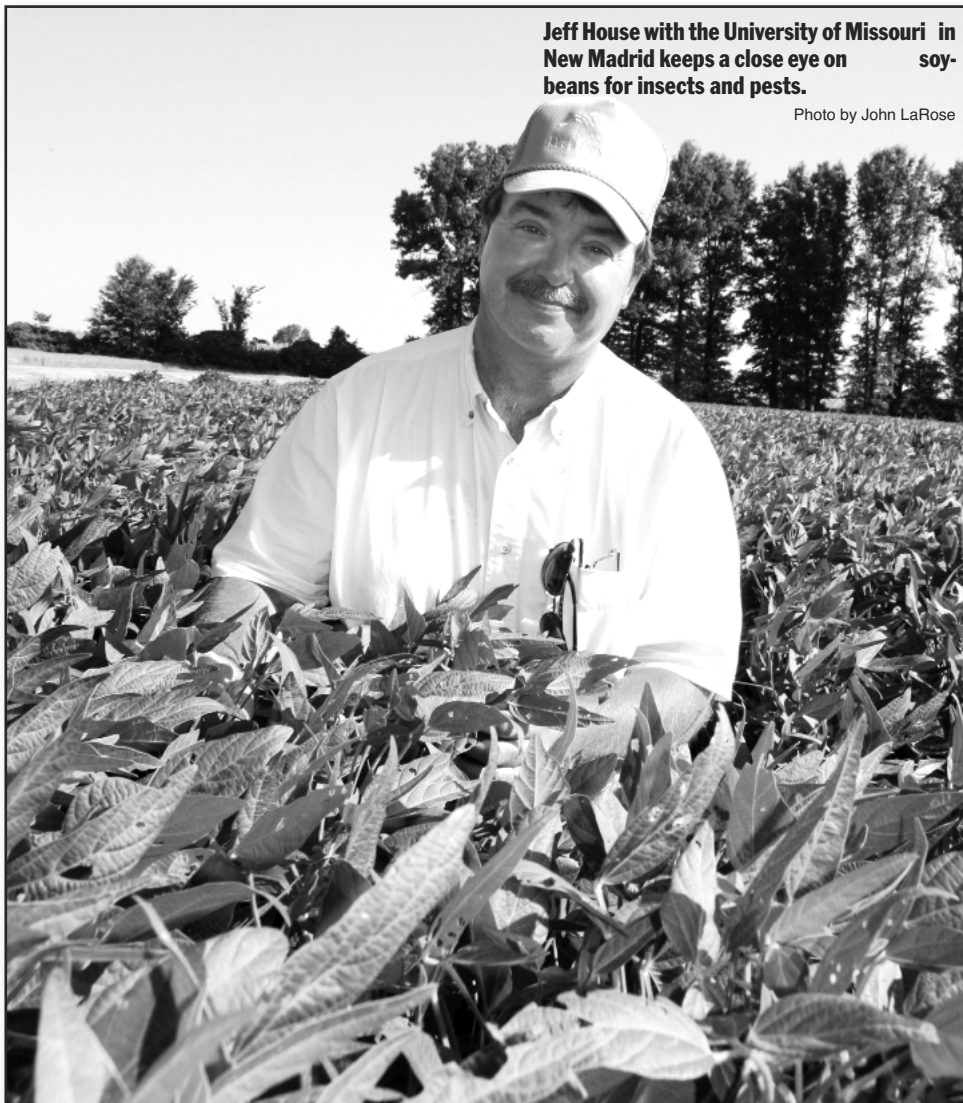
Agronomy Specialist, Jeff House with the University of Missouri in New Madrid kept a close eye on insects and pests in soybeans this past growing season.

"We did not find a lot of stink bugs other than a few hot spots, but they really took off in the last two weeks of September into October. We did not find a major build up of bean leaf beetles, once again only a few scattered hot spots, but started to see an insect that we needed to

"It started out it was just a few fields every year. However, last year 100 percent of the fields that I was in I could find them," House said. "They weren't damaging 100 percent of the fields but I can take you to some spots in the New Madrid bottoms that I feel were causing a 10 to 20 bushel yield loss."

Southeast Missouri is not the only location noticing the Dectes stem borer. According to House these insects are also showing up in Tennessee, Kentucky, Arkansas and Kansas.

House said that the insects are hitting all fields but not causing economic damage to every field in the area.



Jeff House with the University of Missouri in New Madrid keeps a close eye on soybeans for insects and pests.

Photo by John LaRose

address," House said.

According to House an insect has been detected in the region called Dectes stem borer that affects soybean plants. He said that the insect showed up in fields just a few years ago and is now accelerating to become an economic pest.

"We are trying to get a handle on what the Dectes stem borer is doing to effect crops," House said. "We had never really looked at it as being an economic pest, but we are finding some areas that it is. I am talking about an 80 to 90 percent plus infestation in some areas."

House said, that currently there is no reliable known control measures when it comes to preventing Dectes stem borer.

"We don't really have a good control measure, but we know that a pyrethroid will kill them," House said. "The problem is the timing. You have to kill the adults before the eggs are laid. Juveniles begin boring immediately into the plant and are protected so you can't get to them. So we have to work on getting to the adults. Their emergences are so long that we just don't have a timing factor."

House said that there is an ongoing research to find a way to prevent the Dectes stem borer.

"We have looked into using pyrethroids last year," House said. "I can also tell you that two shots of pyrethroids won't keep them 100 percent out of fields. We never get 100 percent control anyway, but we are having to really step back and look at this two shot approach. We have some instances where one shot of pyrethroid does really good but the timing is super critical and very hard to time."

The Dectes stem borer has been around for years, but has really taken off in the past few years.

"I first thought that 15 to 20 percent of the fields may be seeing some economic damage, but I think that will be much greater last year" House said. "But it's to the point that I don't know if it is worth going out and spraying for just that insect until we get some experience with it under our belts, we have to get a handle on the timing and thresholds. Spraying for it alone and not getting economic control because we missed the application window just isn't cost effective."

House also said that researchers are still unsure exactly why the insect has been showing up in fields but has a feeling that tillage has played a big part in the appearance of the insect.

"We don't know if it is weather. We really don't know why all of a sudden this insect has appeared to this degree," House said. "We feel like it is because there has been a reduction in tillage, especially deep tillage and that they are over wintering in the soybeans stubble more readily."

House said that if you are a dedicated soybean farmer then you may need to look at a early season insect control product for preventing Dectes stem borer.

"One thing is variety selection. You should match the varieties to the type of ground you farm. You have to look at the characteristics and study yield trails to see what you want to grow. What you want to look at is possibly early insect control and if you don't run a fungicide program I would highly recommend an insecticide program along the R3 stage and at the same time I would be putting a fungicide on," House said. "I always recommend if you put a fungicide on they you might as well spend the money to put a pyrethroid with it." Δ