

Grasshoppers are back, here's what to do

By: Jake Hadfield & Matti Leak

As many of you have noticed, grasshopper numbers are high and increasing daily. At the Extension office, we have received numerous calls about the disastrous effects grasshoppers are having across the county. For whatever reason, it seems we are experiencing another strong year for insects. While I have not heard of many Mormon crickets in Juab County, I know surrounding counties are being hit hard by them. Hopefully, this article can provide you with tips and tricks to help handle grasshoppers. One thing to know is that treatments will help lower grasshopper numbers, but they will keep coming all summer long!

Two keys for controlling grasshoppers are to treat as broad an area as possible when you first see grasshoppers and to treat them while they are young and in the nymph stage. These two strategies will help you achieve the most effective control. Treating the perimeter of your property while grasshoppers are young can be one of the best places to start. Once grasshoppers develop wings, they become almost impossible to control. Enlisting neighbors and other community members to treat can also help reduce grasshopper pressure; the wider the treatment area, the better the control.

Keep in mind that it is best to administer treatment as early as possible, while grasshoppers are still in the nymph stage. Grasshoppers do not develop wings until they are adults, and while they are in the nymph stage, they are not as mobile. When they develop wings, they do not stay in one area long enough for insecticides to work effectively.

Mowing a wide swath around your property can help prevent the migration of nymphs into your crops, garden, or lawn. There are three common chemical methods for eliminating grasshoppers: bait, dusts, and sprays. Bait can be spread across a field, lawn, or garden and targets grasshoppers and other foraging insects. Bait must be reapplied frequently and immediately following rain or irrigation to be effective. Often, baits are seen as the best treatment method. Dusting is another method that will eliminate grasshoppers but is a more intense procedure. It does not stick to forages well and needs to be applied frequently to be effective. Sprays are the most affordable method for eliminating grasshoppers but do require special equipment. Sprays will stick to plant material and kill grasshoppers on contact. However, sprays need to be applied multiple times, which can add up over the summer season.

It is not too late for grasshopper treatment yet. However, within the next few weeks, grasshoppers will start to develop wings and will be hard to treat. The next couple of weeks are the time to act to prevent the spread of grasshoppers throughout the county. Please remember to read the instructions and labels when dealing with insecticides.

Additionally, if there are any sightings of Mormon crickets within the county, please let Juab County Extension know as soon as possible.

For more information, please contact the Extension Office at (435) 623-3450 or email Jacob.hadfield@usu.edu.