



# Pest e-alerts



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## **Update on Alfalfa Insect and Crop Conditions, Summer 2018**

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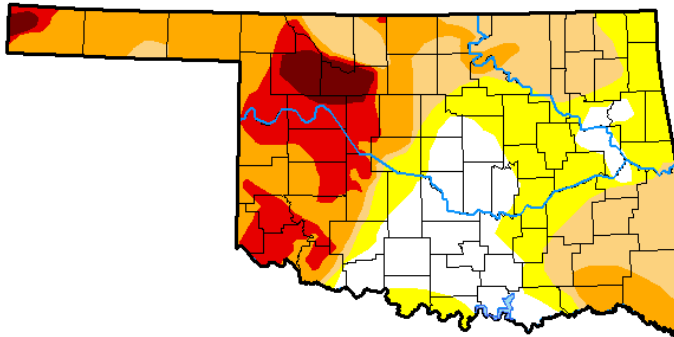
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While the heat of summer builds, alfalfa growers and consultants must remain vigilant in scouting for various insect pests and monitoring of soil/plant conditions.

As a perennial legume, alfalfa provides a favorable habitat and food source for a large number of insect species. With insect pests so varied in their life cycles and habits, feeding injury caused by one or more species may occur within seasonal timeframes or throughout the year if conditions permit. While the presence of many of the insects found may not cause immediate alarm, seasonal outbreaks of others can be detrimental to existing and newly seeded stands. Often, the damage resulting from feeding by insects threatens not only the yield or quality of a particular harvest of alfalfa, but may also result in thinning of stands and reduction in stand-life. In addition, summer brings environmental stresses that can mimic insect pressure. Mesonet data through 19 June indicated a few areas throughout the state have received beneficial moisture, while many areas, especially west of I-35, still in the moderate to extreme drought category.

**U.S. Drought Monitor**  
**Oklahoma**

**June 19, 2018**  
(Released Thursday, Jun. 21, 2018)  
Valid 8 a.m. EDT



*Drought Conditions (Percent Area)*

	None	D0-D4	D1-D4	D2-D4	D3-D4	D4
<b>Current</b>	17.85	82.15	59.72	38.37	14.56	3.01
<b>Last Week</b> 06-12-2018	19.29	80.71	50.75	35.76	23.91	2.12
<b>3 Months Ago</b> 03-20-2018	38.11	61.89	48.50	42.41	34.93	8.20
<b>Start of Calendar Year</b> 01-02-2018	0.00	100.00	77.15	38.76	0.00	0.00
<b>Start of Water Year</b> 09-26-2017	64.46	35.54	0.77	0.00	0.00	0.00
<b>One Year Ago</b> 06-20-2017	73.11	26.89	3.18	0.00	0.00	0.00

Intensity:

- D0 Abnormally Dry
- D1 Moderate Drought
- D2 Severe Drought
- D3 Extreme Drought
- D4 Exceptional Drought

*The Drought Monitor focuses on broad-scale conditions. Local conditions may vary. See accompanying text summary for forecast statements.*

Author:

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National Drought Mitigation Center



<http://droughtmonitor.unl.edu/>

Fields we have scouted and reports from consultants within the state have indicated early flowering, premature leaf drop or plants just not growing well. Unfortunately, as the drought persists, these conditions may only worsen. Alfalfa, which has the unique ability to go dormant (drought-induced dormancy) during extended dry periods, is one of the few crops that can recover once adequate precipitation or irrigation occurs. There are various production strategies growers can consider during drought in alfalfa to maximize existing forage or maintain stand-life until moisture arrives. Cutting management, irrigation (if available), insect control and fertilization are all important areas of consideration when dealing with summer environmental conditions. Insects during this time of year migrate into alfalfa fields in search of food sources. Insect pest found throughout the summer months such as foliage feeding caterpillars, leafhoppers, plant bugs and aphids can all add additional stress to the crop. Especially monitor recently cut fields as increasing populations of these insects can quickly damage new plant regrowth. Management decisions must be made based on individual field conditions and potential return on investment related to cutting or insect control.

More information on summer insect pest management on alfalfa can be found in CR-7150, *Alfalfa Forage Insect Control*, which can be obtained online at:

<http://pods.dasnr.okstate.edu/docushare/dsweb/Get/Document-2364/EPP-7150web.pdf>

## **Disease and Insect Diagnostic Laboratory**

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