

County Agent News
“All Around the Farm”
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The Fair is Over!

The 2015 Burke County Fair is over and plans are underway for a fall racing weekend with Enduro races and maybe adding a Mudding completion and Pure Stock races as well. Plans are already starting for the 2016 Burke County Fair which will be the 100th Burke County Fair!



It was a great weekend of good weather and lots of people attending. The “Buckin’ at the Border” bull riding was not as well attended as we had hoped but well enough that we hope to try again. Thirty-six cars for Saturday’s enduro was a new high for us and the grandstands and pit areas were full. The hot windy day over dried the track and some problems with water trucks made the opening laps very dusty and the grandstands almost inhabitable for part of the first heat. But thanks to the Bowbells Fire Departments water truck and other volunteers, the track got wet down and the second heat and feature events didn’t have the dust problem so it was a great evening of racing. Lots of great food, exhibit numbers were up in the main building, vendor spaces were full and fair goers had a great time renewing old friendships and making new friends. I would like to take this opportunity to all the Board members and other volunteers who helped with events, fair cleanup, and the cash sponsors who made this event possible. If you would like to be part of this great group to help with next years 100th Burke County Fair give me a call or talk to any of the fair board members. Your help and input is greatly appreciated.

Good Bugs

The warm weather this past week should have been perfect of the leafy spurge beetles and I will be scouting possible collection sites this week. After the past couple of cool summers I know that populations are down and I don’t expect to find huge numbers of beetles but I believe they should be having a good year.

This week’s Good Bug Corner from Janet Knodel NDSU Extension Entomologist, in the NDSU Crop & Pest Report, is the spined soldier bug, *Podisus maculiventris*, in the family Pentatomidae (or stink bugs). As the name implies, they will emit a strong odor when disturbed as a defensive mechanism. Spined soldier bugs are brown to tan and 8.5-13 mm long. They can be identified by their protruding spurs on the prothorax behind the head. This insect is an excellent predator on many insect pests of potatoes, beans, corn and other crops. It prefers to feed on larvae of European corn borer, diamondback moth, fall armyworm, cabbage looper, imported cabbageworm, Colorado potato beetle, velvetbean caterpillar and flea beetles. In potato fields, spined soldier bugs, in combination with two-spotted stink bugs can reduce infestations of Colorado potato beetles by 50%. Individual spined soldier bugs also have been observed to eat about 100 late instar fall armyworm larvae over the season. Now, that is quite an appetite!



Spined Soldier Bug, predator. (Photo courtesy of Phil Sloderback, Kansas SU, Bugwood.org) 9/25/07012

This is another one I often get calls about because it is so ugly everyone thinks it must be bad!

Bad Bugs

If you haven't scouted your alfalfa for the presence of Alfalfa Weevils you need to get that done. If your alfalfa seems to be delayed or appears to be frost damaged you may have a weevil problem. WE have reached the growing degree days for maximum weevil activity. At this point the best response for beetle activity is to get it cut ASAP. You may then need to monitor alfalfa regrowth and possibly apply an insecticide to protect regrowth for a second cutting.

