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## **Wheat head armyworm damage predicted in Golden Triangle areas**

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Wheat head army worm (*Dargida diffusa*) has been a minor pest but in the recent years it has sporadically become an important pest of corn and wheat grown in Northcentral Montana by causing significant kernel damage. Alarm over this pest was elevated in 2014 with the incidence of increased percentages of insect-damaged kernels (IDK) in wheat harvested in the Golden Triangle area of Montana (Reddy and Frank 2014). The pheromone traps (four traps/location, baited with a combination of the sex attractant compounds Z11-16Ac and Z11-16Ald) were installed in the Golden Triangle areas (Dutton, Brady, Shelby and Valier/Conrad) during May 2017. Overall, traps caught in the range of 40-70 moths/trap/week. This indicates the moths will lay eggs and eventually larvae will emerge and cause damage to the crops.

There are currently no integrated pest management thresholds or recommended treatments for this pest due to its sporadic late season appearance (Peairs et al. 2010). The use of pheromone baited traps are limited to monitoring, and control is based on use of insecticides, despite the fact such applications may not be labeled for use near harvest. Growers are urged to read and follow the label prior to any application of insecticides.



The pheromone traps in the winter wheat field at WTARC, Conrad.

For wheat head armyworm biology, damage potential, monitoring and management options, please refer to the attached alert documents. The growers with the problem of wheat head armyworm are advised to contact, Gadi VP Reddy or Debra Miller at 406-278-7707 or email ([reddy@montana.edu](mailto:reddy@montana.edu)/[debra.miller13@montana.edu](mailto:debra.miller13@montana.edu))

### **References**

Peairs, F.B., Hein, G.L., Brewer, M.J., 2010. High Plains Integrated Pest Management: Wheat Head Armyworm, [http://wiki.bugwood.org/HPIPm:Wheat HeadArmyworm](http://wiki.bugwood.org/HPIPm:WheatHeadArmyworm).

Reddy, G.V.P. and F.B. Antwi. 2016. Toxicity of natural insecticides on the larvae of wheat head armyworm, *Dargida diffusa* (Lepidoptera: Noctuidae). *Environmental Toxicology and Pharmacology* 42: 156–162.