

Grey Tortrix Moth

(*Cnephasia stephansiana*)

Pest Alert

March, 2016

Cnephasia stephansiana was first reported in Nova Scotia in 1954 and it is now widespread in eastern and western Canada. *Cnephasia* caterpillars caused damage to alfalfa in the Williams Lake and Kersley regions of B.C. in 2009, 2010 and 2011. Farmers are asked to report any suspect damage in new regions to the B.C. Ministry of Agriculture offices or contacts below:

- Ken Awmack, Ministry of Agriculture, Williams Lake; Telephone: (250) 398-4501; Email: Ken.Awmack@gov.bc.ca
- Susanna Acheampong, Ministry of Agriculture, Kelowna; Telephone: (250) 861-7230; Email: Susanna.Acheampong@gov.bc.ca

Identification

Adults: Adults are greyish-white moths, about 18 - 22 mm wing span (Figure 1).

Larvae: Larvae vary in colour from brownish black to yellowish (Figure 2).

Life Cycle

The life cycle in B.C. is not known but larvae are present by mid-June. In Japan and Europe, *Cnephasia* species are known to overwinter as young larvae in silken cocoons. The young larvae feed from April to June, pupation occurs in June and July, and moths fly in July and August.



Figure 1. Adult *Cnephasia stephansiana*



Figure 2. Left, young larva; Right, mature larva

Damage

On alfalfa, larvae feed by mining leaves and later live in spun or folded leaves (Figure 3).

Hosts

Reported hosts include alfalfa, clover and weeds such as lambs quarters, hogweed, cow parsnip, thistle, broad leaf plantain, dock, sorrel and dandelion.

Control

There are currently no registered chemical control products in Canada for this pest. Insecticides used for the control of other caterpillars in alfalfa such as Sevin (carbaryl) will provide control. It is also recommended that infested fields be cut early before caterpillars have caused significant damage. A parasitic wasp, *Scambus canadensis* has been reared from caterpillars and may play a role in controlling this pest.

Acknowledgement

We would like to thank Drs. Jean-Francois Landry and Andrew Bennett of Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada, Insect Identification Service, Ottawa for identification of moths and parasitic wasps.



Figure 3. *Cnephasia stephansiana* feeding damage to alfalfa leaves

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