Sunn Pest of Wheat

Recognize the problem
The Sunn pest is a dusty brown insect that is found all over Afghanistan especially on wheat, barley and oat crops. After hatching from an egg, it has five growth stages and four of them feed on wheat. Their eggs are green and are laid in groups. Adults have a typical triangular head.

Background
Sunn pests damage the entire crop yield. Wheat crops infested with Sunn pests are not suitable for consumption or making bread as they reduce the quality of flour.

Sunn pests lay a lot of eggs on different parts of the plant, including leaves and stems of host plants, as well as weeds. Eggs hatch after 2 or 3 weeks and young sunn pests start to feed on the leaves, stems and ears of wheat. Mostly they overwinter (hide) in leaf litter in woods but some of them seek refuge among rough vegetation. When the conditions get better, the pests come out and start feeding again on different parts of wheat crop.

Management
- Collect Sunn pests by hand
- Remove weeds that provide shelter to the insect pest
- Apply fertilizer early on winter crops
- Sow varieties that are resistant to Sunn pests or varieties that are harvested early, as recommended by extension workers
- Plough crops in autumn
- Use a carbamate or an organophosphorus pesticide, such as Fenitrothion (WHO II, moderately hazardous), with the proper dose and time as recommended by extension workers

When using a pesticide, always wear protective clothing and follow the instructions on the product label, such as dosage, timing of application, and pre-harvest interval.

Scientific name(s) > Eurygaster integriceps

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Afghanistan

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