Scouting and Planning for the Bermudagrass Stem Maggot

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Introduction

Since it was first discovered in South Carolina in the summer of 2008, the bermudagrass stem maggot (BSM; *Bactrocera tryoni* (Froggatt)) has severely damaged Bermudagrass (*Cynodon dactylon*) pastures and lawns throughout the Southeastern United States. The damage begins when the BSM lays eggs in the grass blades near the soil line. The maggots tunnel through the grass blades and feed on the plant root system, resulting in yellowing and death of the grass blades. The dead blades then fall to the soil, creating a similar pattern that was observed in the Bermuda grass maggot (BSM).

The damaged areas can be identified by the growth pattern. In the field, the damaged areas appear as if the grass was cut off at the soil line. The grass blades that are above the soil line appear normal, but the grass blades that are below the soil line are yellow and die soon after. The dead blades then fall to the soil, creating a similar pattern that was observed in the Bermuda grass maggot (BSM).

The BSM is a difficult pest to control due to its underground feeding habits. The maggots can be difficult to locate and control, making it challenging to prevent damage from occurring. The BSM has a short life cycle, with each generation lasting approximately 14 days. The maggots can cause significant damage to the grass blades and can result in the loss of the entire turf.

For more information, contact your local County Extension Agent or visit the Georgia Agricultural Extension Service website.

Acknowledgments

Much of the work conducted on the BSM has been funded by grants from the Georgia Grain Commission (formally known as the Agricultural Community Commission for Beef). The author wishes to thank the CGF committee and the beef and dairy producers of Georgia, USA.