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High level of cereal leaf beetle incidence in Choteau, MT

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In Montana, cereal leaf beetle, *Oulema melanopus* (Coleoptera: Chrysomelidae) has been considered as an economic pest of spring seed cereal crops such as in wheat, barley and oats since 1999. Within the last four years (2014-2017), several growers and extension agents from Golden Triangle area have been repeatedly reporting higher incidence of cereal leaf beetles in cereal crops. Brent Roeder (extension agent, Teton County) mentioned that this year and last year, about 40 and 10 Fairfield malt barely growers' sprayed insecticide to manage cereal leaf beetle, respectively.

Cereal leaf beetle is widely distributed in several areas of the North American wheat belt, particularly in Montana, North Dakota, and adjacent areas of the Canadian prairie-provinces. In Montana, it has been known to present since 1989. According to Blodgett et al. (2004), cereal leaf beetle has been considered as a serious pest of cereal crops in several counties of Montana from 1998. This pest has a broad host range such as barley, wheat, oats, and rye, where the larvae can cause serious damage (Wanner and O'Neill, 2016). The larvae are the significant damaging stage and feed largely on the upper surface of tender new leaves, scraping the leaf tissue without chewing all the way through the leaf. Adults overwinter in the debris and fallen leaves. In the spring, female adults lay eggs in grain fields.



Figure-1: Cereal leaf beetle adult, *Oulema melanopus* (Photo credit: WTARC)

For thresholds, chemical control and other management option, please refer to MontGuide.

References

Blodgett, S., Tharp, S., Kephart, K., 2004. Cereal leaf beetle. Montana State University, Extension Service, Montguide, MT200406 AG, 11/04.

Wanner, K., O'Neill, R., 2016. Cereal Leaf Beetle. MontGuide, Montana State University, MT201604AG New 2/16.