



Box 42131
TEXAS TECH UNIVERSITY
LUBBOCK, TX 79409-2131
PHONE: 806-742-2816 FAX: 806-742-2880
E-MAIL: COTTONLINK@TTU.EDU
WWW.COTTONLINK.ORG

BOLL WEEVIL

DEFINITION

The boll weevil is a serious pest for cotton farmers across the country. A boll weevil is actually a beetle that is approximately one-fourth of an inch in length that feeds on cotton buds and flowers, which can destroy the plants if left unattended.

DETAILS

- The boll weevil is thought to be native to Central America and migrated to Mexico and the U.S. in the late 1800's.
- By the 1920's, the boll weevil had reached all cotton growing areas in the U.S.
- Adult boll weevils enter cotton fields from early spring to mid-summer to feed on cotton buds, flowers, and immature bolls.
- The life cycle of a boll weevil lasts approximately three weeks from egg to adult. Females can lay about 200 eggs in a 10-12 day period, which hatch in 3-5 days. The larvae feed on the cotton leaf on which they were hatched for 8-10 days then progress to the pupae stage, which lasts 5-7 days.
- It is possible for 8-10 generations of boll weevils to be produced per season.
- Limitations to a boll weevil population include extreme heat, drought, fire, ants and other insects, birds, and low temperatures (they will begin to die at about 23 degrees Fahrenheit).
- The first boll weevil eradication experiment was conducted in North Carolina in 1978. The success of this experiment led to area-wide programs being established all over the U.S. beginning in 1980. The eradication program is a cooperative program between farmers, eradication programs, and the USDA.
- The Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation, Inc. is currently working to stop boll weevils in the state of Texas.

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

- Charles T. Allen, Program Director, Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation
Email: allenc@txbollweevil.org
Phone: 915-672-2800
www.txbollweevil.org
- Please see the CottonLink Contact Directory, to find boll weevil specialists, extension agents and specialists, and other cotton organizations representatives for boll weevil information.

STORY IDEAS

- Steps being taken in you area to eradicate boll weevils
- Interview farmers in your area about the impact of boll weevils on their crops and about the Texas Boll Weevil Eradication Foundation, Inc. and its work
- Interview farmers and research the historical significance of boll weevils in your local community

IMPACT

- It is estimated that since the boll weevil entered the U.S. cotton farmers have suffered losses of approximately \$13 billion.
- In recent years, it is estimated that boll weevils cost U.S. cotton farmers approximately \$300 million per year.
- In Texas, approximately 6 million acres of cotton are involved in the eradication program each year

RELEASED: JUNE 18, 2007
COMPILED BY: COURTNEY GIBSON