

The West Indian Canefly (WIC), *Saccharosydne saccharivora*

An emerging pest of sugarcane in Louisiana



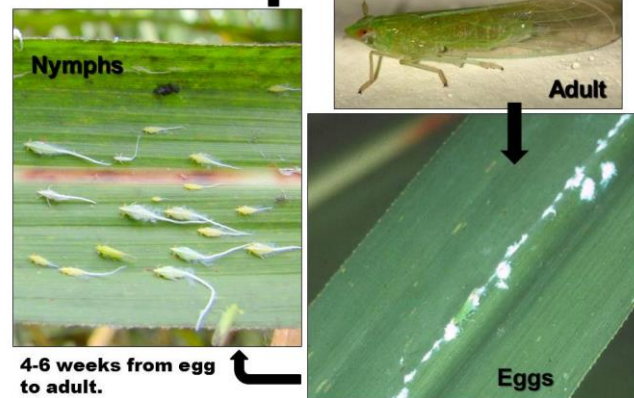
Sugarcane injury occurs when WIC adults and nymphs feed on sugarcane leaves removing sugary sap from the plant. Excess sugar is excreted and coats the top side of leaves with a shiny, sticky residue called “honeydew”. This honeydew allows for the growth of black sooty mold which can cover sugarcane leaves and disrupt photosynthesis. Yield loss likely occurs as a result of both direct feeding and reduced plant growth from sooty mold. Eggs are laid on upper canopy leaves and nymphs feed on newer leaves as the plant grows. Sooty mold is worst in the lower canopy and can result in premature leaf death (necrosis). Yield losses resulting from WIC infestations are still being investigated, but damage depends on the duration of infestation in addition to pest density (nymphs/leaf).



Honeydew (left) and sooty mold (right) on sugarcane leaves as a result of WIC feeding.

WIC History: The WIC has been known to be a damaging pest of sugarcane in Jamaica and other parts of the Caribbean. It was first reported in Louisiana in 1944, with major outbreaks in 1969, 1997, 2012, and 2016. Outbreaks may be related to warm winter temperatures without a hard freeze.

WIC Life Cycle



WIC management – Only lambda-cyhalothrin (Karate®) is registered for WIC control in sugarcane, but crisis exemptions submitted to EPA allowed for alternative products to be used in 2012 and 2016. Karate is not recommended if aphids are present along with WIC because this product can potentially flare aphid infestations. Besiege® (chlorantraniliprole and lambda-

cyhalothrin) may be used if WIC and sugarcane borer control is needed. Fields should be scouted by counting the number of nymphs present on the underside the 3rd or 4th leaf down from the dewlap. Fields should be treated if scouting over 2 weeks indicates infestations are increasing, average densities are >30 nymphs/leaf, and sooty mold is present. Contact your local county agent for the latest recommendations for WIC control.