Black Grass Bug Damages Wheat

The **black grass bug** normally feeds on rangeland or CRP grasses and is especially fond of crested wheatgrass. It was doing quite “**well**” (Friday, May 7th, 2004) in **wheat fields** located south and southeast of the Bombing Range. Damage to wheat looked like it would have an economic impact on yield. If your farm is located anywhere along the north end of dryland country or in areas where rangeland grasses are abundant, keep a close eye out for this critter. It looks like an elongated fly with large antennae and is **at least** ¼ inch long. It is brown or black and has a piercing/sucking mouthpart that is not visible without help from a magnifying glass or microscope. The bug places this syringe-like mouthpart into the wheat leaf and damages or removes chlorophyll. The bugs begin feeding at the leaf tip and move downward. Most of the feeding is done on the upper leaf surface. **Symptoms** include **irregularly-shaped white spots** and dehydrated tissue. Treatment is warranted when damage to the flag leaf is expected. **Yield reductions**, **after the flag leaf has been affected**, are **likely** to be **significant**. Call Larry Lutcher if you have any questions.