

Pasture Pests:
Black Field cricket (*Teleogryllus commodus*)
Information Sheet

Identification.

There are two types of crickets found in the pastures of New Zealand they are the black field cricket (BFC) and the smaller native cricket.

Adult Black Field Cricket are up to 2.5 cm long and despite their name are actually dark brown. Although they have wings they only fly when numbers are very high. They are clearly bigger than the native crickets and they have large heads and very long antennae.



Unlike the native cricket, Black Field Cricket's are active during the night and will run for shelter if disturbed. If you are trying to evaluate Black Field Cricket numbers during the day then a solution of water and detergent (4-5 mls dishwashing liquid in 10L water) poured into the cracks in the soil will flush them out.

Distribution and damage.

The Black Field Cricket is found in the northern areas of New Zealand as well as Bay of Plenty, Hawkes Bay, Taranaki and Manawatu where they can cause significant damage to pastures.

Black Field Crickets live within the cracks in the ground and feed outwards from these cracks, they prefer to eat grasses, legumes and weeds. Young establishing pastures less than 1 year old are the most susceptible to their damage.

More than 10 Black Field Crickets per m² are considered economically significant and control recommended, they can be found at 100-150/m² in bad years. 2 Black Field Crickets m² will consume the equal of 1 sheep while in dairy pasture 25/m² can be responsible for 2000 kgs DM/ha/yr. As you can see the potential for long term damage is high and therefore early detection is very important.

Luckily Black Field Cricket are very effectively controlled using grain baits applied at a rate relative to the population base. For more information on cricket baits go to the [Pest Go website](#).

Lifecycle.

A single female BFC can lay up to 2000 eggs between mid February and early May.

These eggs are laid into damp soil and are 0.3 cm long, laid singly are white and oval shaped. The hatched nymphs take 2-4 months to mature into adults and live for another 2-3 months. BFC nymphs pass through 9-10 stages and live and hide within the pastures, overwintering as eggs.

For more information or to discuss how to protect your pasture against Black Field Cricket please [contact Specialty Seeds](#)



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