CZU: 632.768:633.31

CONTRIBUTIONS TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF LEAF BEETLES (CHRYSOMELIDAE) FROM ALFALFA

Calestru Livia*, Belova Victoria
Institute of Zoology, Chisinau, Republic of Moldova
*E-mail: livia.calestru@zoology.md

The leaf beetles (*Coleoptera, Chrysomelidae*) family is one of the biggest of the order Coleoptera. The practical importance of the leaf beetles in the human activity draws the attention of the researchers permanently.

The faunistic materials were sampled in the alfalfa culture from Horești, Nișcani, Piatra Albă, Telița, Svetlîi, Vulcănești, Vadul lui Isac, Călinești, Trifești and Saharna during May and June 2022. Most of the investigated fields were adjacent to a forest sector. The entomological net was used for collection. Some specimens were also gathered by hand from the leaves or soil surfaces.

A total number of 10 leaf beetles species belonging to 9 de genera and 5 subfamilies were identified all over the studied fields: *Cassida denticollis* Suffrian, 1844, *C. rubiginosa* Müller, 1776, *Chrysolina marginata* (Linnaeus, 1767), *Entomoscelis adonidis* (Pallas, 1771), *Galeruca tanaceti* (Linnaeus, 1758), *Gastrophysa polygoni* (Linnaeus, 1758), *Gonioctena fornicata* (Brüggeman, 1873), *Oulema melanopus* (Linnaeus, 1758), *Pachybrachis fimbriolatus* (Suffrian, 1848) and *Plagiodera versicolora* (Laicharting, 1781).

The species *Gonioctena fornicata*, a known pest of alfalfa was represented in all of studied fields. The lucerne leaf beetle usually feed more intensively at the stage of larva, that's why the larvae cause more damage than adult insects. Often the feeding on green parts of the plant leads to the worsening of the physiological condition of the plant attacked, and consequently to the decrease of harvest or to the plant growth decrease.

Considering that other herbaceous plant species can be found in the alfalfa fields, this explains the variety of leaf beetles collected: *Cassida denticollis*, *C. rubiginosa*, *Chrysolina marginata*, *Entomoscelis adonidis*, *Galeruca tanaceti*, *Gastrophysa polygoni*, *Oulema melanopus* and *Pachybrachis fimbriolatus*. The presence of *Plagiodera versicolora* is accidental because it feeds exclusively on leaves and pollen of willow and poplar trees and can be explained by the existence of forest next to the field.

The investigations will continue throughout the growing season of alfalfa and the list can be supplemented with other leaf beetles species.

Acknowledgments: The study was performed under the project 20.80009.7007.02 „Evolutionary changes of economically important terrestrial fauna, of rare and protected species under anthropogenic and climatic changes".

Keywords: *Chrysomelidae*, alfalfa, decrease of harvest, leaf beetles species, variety.