



## *Inside Ag* *October 2008*

### **Bug of the Month** **Mecinus Janthinus**



Dalmatian toadflax, a perennial weed with attractive yellow flowers, has been steadily invading areas around Grand Mesa in western Colorado.

This summer, we observed a halt and possible retreat of toadflax as the toadflax stem boring weevil, *Mecinus janthinus*, has eaten through a number of stands of the noxious weed.

*Mecinus janthinus* kills plants by laying eggs in the stems where larvae hatch and feed. The hollow stems are no

longer useful to the plant but they serve as an overwintering site for the next generation of adults that emerge the following spring. Plants that have been attacked by the weevils become stunted, produce fewer flowers, and eventually die.

Fields once filled with the tall thick stems and bright yellow flowers of Dalmatian toadflax now have only a few stunted plants left.

