

THE FORAGER

Agronomics with livestock in mind!

Western Bean Cutworm Sightings are Increasing Rapidly...

In many geographic locations, there has been an increasing number of western bean cutworms caught (and/or sighted), appearing to be more numerous than a year ago. For instance, within one week in Ohio the total for 2010 (so far) is 47 as opposed to 2009, when this number was not reached for two weeks. Moths seem to be appearing much earlier than in the recent past. A couple of observations suggest that some of these moths may be coming from western states (the Ohio scenario). First, most of the recent rain has come from due west. In fact, moths were found still alive in traps setup in Wooster, OH. Second, researchers at Purdue University (IN) reported large catches (over a hundred total so far), as well as seeing egg masses. Nonetheless, the rapid increase of OH catches indicates that scouting for egg masses should begin soon, especially in pre-tassel corn. While many areas of the state (OH), along with other geographic areas are a little behind the pre-tassel stage, there are fields in southern and west-central Ohio, along with other more-southern states that have corn already beginning to tassel. It is important to note the extent of this moth population, since many are being caught in these areas and there is a potential for this concern to "move north" as corn begins to tassel and warm, humid temperatures continue.

To scout for eggs, inspect a minimum of 20 plants at five different locations in a field. Eggs are normally laid on the upper surface of the top-most leaves. The eggs are laid in masses of 20-100, and are first white in color, then within a few days they turn tan... and then turn a deep purple. The egg-stage lasts about a week. Once eggs turn purple, larvae will emerge within 48 hours. If 5% or more of the corn (that has been inspected) has egg masses, treatment is necessary once larvae have emerged—western bean cutworms are protected against treatment in the egg stage. If eggs are located, please contact your local extension educator or a field crop insect specialist for further information and advice on products to effectively deal with and eradicate these insects.

Note: see pictures (right hand column) showing moth and egg masses at various stages of development.

(Edited from an article by Michel, Hammond & Eisley, The Ohio State University Dept of Entomology)



CORN SHOWS SIGNS OF HEAT STRESS!

Many locations are losing some potential on the 2010 corn crop. The continued dryness combined with the hotter than normal temperatures (and humidity) is hitting just as the corn is entering its critical pollination stage. Corn is starting to show considerable stress in many areas and it is starting to shave off some yield potential.

As summer heats up, corn is not the only crop to show signs of stress from hot temperatures and low moisture. Numerous crops can be added to this list, such as soybeans, alfalfa, etc. Leaves are curling from dryness, giving a withered appearance. Still other locations are seeing a significant increase in rainfall recently. Many areas receiving significant rainfall in the past month dealt with flooding and soil erosion as the rain fell in a very short time frame.

It is important to check with local county or state ag agencies to gain a perspective on such issues as topsoil and subsoil moisture content. This can help producers to better ascertain the extent of damage caused by heat stress and a lack of (or excess of) rainfall and soil-related moisture. Producers who decide to harvest early will note a substantially reduced yield, along with a typically low nutritional profile for their forages.

Consider late summer/early fall seeding to help amplify forage inventories, with such products as TRICAL, or some mixes of grasses and small grains.

(Edited from an article by R. Swoboda, Iowa State University)

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