WATCH OUT FOR EARLY SEASON PESTS

EXTENSION
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With planting season moving forward much, much faster than 2019, it is important to keep an eye on planted fields for potential pests and other issues that may arise. In a previous article I mentioned that Nebraska Extension has a moth trapping network for cutworms and army worms. University of Missouri Extension developed a Black Cutworm Monitoring and Forecasting Program several years ago. A number of states are using moth traps to determine potential problems with black cutworms, true armyworms and other worms. In early April in the Eastern Cornbelt of Indiana there were several intense captures of black cutwork moths. An intense capture is nine moths over a two-night period in the trap. We had an intense capture of black cutworks on April 22nd & 23rd in Auburn in Nemaha County. This was the only intense capture of the black cutworm moths from any of our five sites in Falls City, Johnson, near Palmyra in Otoe County and near Hickman in Lancaster County.

So what does this mean? We assume with this intense capture, it is the beginning of egg laying for the black cutworm called the bio-fix. From April 23rd we start at zero (0) growing degree days and we begin counting from there. Growing Degree Days (GDD) start to accumulate when the average temperature for the 24 hour period is above 50 F^0. From April 23rd through May 3rd the accumulated GGDs has been 111. When the GDDs are between 91 - 311, leaf feeding will start. So if you have some black cutworms in your field now, you may see some very minor leaf feeding on seedling corn plants. From 312 – 364 GDDs the first cutting of plants starts and from 365- 430 GDDs is when most of the cutting of corn plants occurs. Depending upon when your corn was planted, and temperatures in May; you could see some cut corn from black cutworms from late May on. The black cutworm can cut corn from its 4th instar stage until pupation, or for 2 ½ -3 weeks. Corn is vulnerable to cutting from emergence through the five-leaf growth stage. If your corn was planted early and got off to a good start, it may outgrow any damage from the black cutworm. I have at times seen black cutworms damage soybeans, but usually at levels that do not require treatment. They usually like to lay their eggs in fields with broadleaf weeds or winter annuals, such as henbit, pennycress or marestail. For more specific information about the Integrated Pest Management (IPM) approach to black cutworm control, go to: http://agebb.missouri.edu/weather/reports/bcwforecast.htm to learn more.

At our site in Otoe County near Palmyra, they trapped more true armyworms than the other sites. True armyworms usually like to lay their eggs in grassy fields. So if you are planting green or have planted into a cover crop, like cereal rye, you may want to be aware of the true armyworm as a potential pest as well.

There were also several variegated cutworm moths trapped at the sites near Hickman, Palmyra and in Johnson. Unless they are at very high numbers, they usually do not require treatment and are not a concern for most agricultural crops, although they can defoliate alfalfa and can be an issue for vegetables, fruit and ornamental crops. It is important to be aware of potential pests that we can have throughout the growing season. If you have questions feel free to contact me at (402) 274-4755, (402) 274-9639 (cell) or at glesoing2@unl.edu.

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