

Partnership Perk



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Western Bean Cutworm Scouting Might be Appropriate

Western bean cutworm (WBC) causes damage to corn by entering the ear and feeding on kernels. Economic damage from WBC has occurred in the past 5 years in some cornfields, mostly in Northwest and West Central Iowa. However, the insect may be increasing its range eastward—populations have been found throughout Iowa and into northern Missouri and Western Illinois. WBC has one generation per year, with adult moths emerging in July, mating and laying eggs on corn leaves. The eggs hatch and within a week to ten days, larvae typically move to ears where they feed on the developing kernels, causing direct loss.

For treatments to be successful, insecticide applications must be timed to reach the exposed larvae. Larvae are susceptible to treatment from egg hatch until they enter the ears; once they enter, they are beyond treatment.

The treatment threshold suggested is when 8 egg masses are found per 100 stalks. Egg masses have been found already this season in Pottawattamie, Story, Benton and Buchanan Counties.

Long story short: Insecticides must be applied when WBC larvae are hatched and exposed on the plant prior to entering the ear for successful control. Egg masses have been found in at least four counties across southern and central Iowa. Scouting for egg masses to time insecticide applications should be done now.

Source: Rich Pope and Carol Pilcher, Department of Entomology