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Cooperative Extension Service
Michigan Energy Conservation Program for Agriculture and Forestry
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Center
November 1990
2 pages

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CORN ROOTWORM MANAGEMENT

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Corn rootworms are key corn pests in Michigan. Two species of rootworms are present; the western¹ being the most common, the northern² species being much less abundant. The greatest damage is done by the immature rootworms (larvae) which feed exclusively on corn roots.

Description of Life Stages:

Immature rootworms are small, whitish, thread-like larvae about 1/8 to 1/2 inch long. They have brownish head and tail sections, with six tiny legs near the head end of the body (see picture). Adults are very active beetles about 1/4 inch long. Northern corn rootworm adults are pale green or yellow without wing markings; western corn rootworm adults are yellow to reddish with three black stripes down their wings (see picture). These wing stripes can vary from mere thin streaks to nearly covering the entire wing.

Life Cycle:

The oval yellowish eggs are laid in the soil near corn plants during August. Eggs overwinter and hatch during early to mid-June of the following year. Rootworms feed only on corn roots and not on any other crop. By mid-June to late July the fully developed larvae become inactive and transform into a resting stage called the "pupa." Adults emerge from the soil during late July or August. They prefer to feed on corn silks, but will also eat corn leaves, tassels, and pollen. Movement of adults between fields is common and they remain active until the first hard frost.

Damage:

Larvae consume small rootlets and tunnel inside the larger primary and brace roots. Seriously dam-

aged plants may fall over (lodge) in high winds or wet soil conditions. These lodged plants will then attempt to grow upright, resulting in the typical curved "goosenecked" stalk. Occasionally, adult beetles feeding on silks can inhibit pollination and seed set.

Management:

Biological Control - Biological control of corn rootworms is limited. Some eggs are consumed by soil predators as are larvae by above-ground predators.

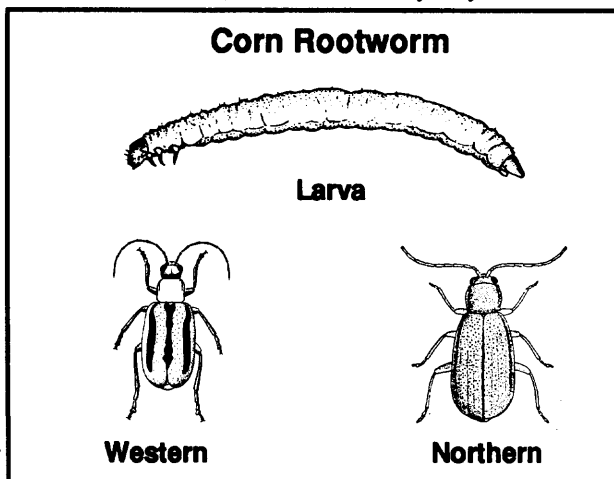
Cultural Control - Rootworms are pests only where corn follows corn without rotation. The best way to avoid corn rootworm damage is to rotate corn with another crop. Corn rootworm larval damage to first year corn is rare in Michigan. When first-year damage has occurred it has been when corn follows weedy soybeans or fields heavily infested with volunteer corn.

Chemical control - If beetle counts indicate a need for control measures and rotation is not a viable option, refer to Table 1 for insecticide recommendations. If you need to control adults to prevent economic losses due to silk clipping, refer to Table 2. Be sure your equipment is properly calibrated. For further details, consult Extension Bulletin E-1582 **Chemical Control of In-**

sects and Nematodes In Field and Forage Crops.

Additional considerations:

Corn rootworm eggs and larvae have lower survival in sandy and coarse textured soils. Borderline thresholds may not be economic to treat on these soils.



¹Western corn rootworm: *Diabrotica virgifera virgifera* LeConte

²Northern corn rootworm: *Diabrotica barberi* Smith & Lawrence

Table 1

Recommended insecticide applications for controlling corn rootworm larvae.¹

<u>Chemical</u>	<u>Form.*</u>	<u>Rate²</u>	<u>Placement³</u>	<u>RUP⁴</u>	<u>Restrictions</u>
Counter	20CR	6 oz	IF, T, B	Y	-- --
Counter	15G	8 oz	IF, T, B	Y	-- --
Lorsban	15G	8 oz	T, B	N	Max. 13.5 lb/acre/season
Dyfonate II	20G	6 oz	T, B	Y	-- --
Furadan	15G	8 oz	IF, T	Y	-- --
Force	1.5G	8 oz	T, B, IF	Y	Rotate to corn or soybeans only.
Broot	15G	8 oz	IF	N	-- --
Rampart, Thimet	15G	8 oz	T, B	Y	-- --
Mocap	15G	8 oz	B	Y	Use only on corn > 6" tall

Table 2

Recommended insecticide applications for controlling adult corn rootworms.¹

<u>Chemical</u>	<u>Form.*</u>	<u>Rate²</u>	<u>RUP⁴</u>	<u>Restrictions (Pre-Harvest Interval)</u>
carbaryl	4F	1 qt	N	none
Lorsban	4EC	1 pt	N	14 days grazing & silage 35 days grain Maximum 15 pt 4EC/acre/season
Lannate	90SP	1/4 lb	Y	3 days forage
Imidan	50WP	1 lb	N	14 days
ULV malathion	9.3C	4 oz	N	5 days
malathion	5EC	1 1/2 pt	N	5 days
(Cygon) dimethoate	4EC	2/3 pt	N	Max. 3 applications/year. Do not apply at pollen shedding. 14 days PHI.
Asana XL	0.66EC	9.8 oz	Y	21 days
Pounce	3.2EC	4 - 8 oz	Y	Apply prior to brown silk.
	2.5 WP	6.4 - 12.80 oz	Y	
Lannate	1.8L	1 pt	Y	3 days
Metasystox-R	2EC	1 1/2 pt	Y	Maximum 3 applications per season. 7 days for one application, 21 days for 2 applications.
PennCap-M	2.0	1 - 2 qt	Y	12 days; Do not apply at pollen shedding if bees are present.

1 Be sure your equipment is properly calibrated. Refer to Extension Bulletin E-1582 **Chemical Control of Insects and Nematodes In Field and Forage Crops**, available at your county Extension office.

2 Rate per 1,000 feet of row.

3 IN - In furrow, T - T-banded, B - Banded

4 Restricted use pesticide. If yes (Y), a pesticide applicator certification is required.

5 Amount of formulation per acre.

* Other formulations may be available.

"This bulletin was prepared with the support of the U.S. Department of Energy, Grant No. DE-FG0276CS60204. However, any opinions, findings, conclusions or recommendations expressed herein are those of the author(s) and do not necessarily reflect the views of DOE"

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Issued in furtherance of Cooperative Extension work in agriculture and home economics, acts of May 8 and June 30, 1914, in cooperation with the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Mike Tate, Interim Director, Cooperative Extension Service, Michigan State University, E. Lansing, MI 48824.

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To protect yourself and others and the environment, always read the label before applying any pesticide.