Cutworm in Soybean

Due to the record high black cutworm moth activity, growers may be considering the use of insecticides in their soybean herbicide application for cutworm control. Historically, cutworms are an unusual pest of soybean but have caused sporadic injury in years when high numbers are present in corn in the Midwest. When they do occur, not all fields are infested, because for some reason the cutworm moths are attracted to some fields but essentially ignored other fields. Preplant herbicide or tillage practices apparently have an influence on egg-laying behavior. As with cornfields, burn down herbicides applied weeks before planting will reduce the attractiveness of the field as an oviposition site. If we have problems this year, there are no economic thresholds for black cutworms in soybeans. The decision to apply an insecticide should be based on the remaining plant population and the average size of the cutworms found. Many of the same insecticides recommended for cutworm control in corn are available for use in soybean.

Billbugs in Orchardgrass

Last year a number of orchardgrass fields in northern VA, central MD, and one on the Eastern Shore were severely damaged by a new pest, the hunting billbug. This weevil, Sphenophorus venatus vestitus, is also commonly known as the “zoysia billbug” in the south, where it has been reported as a pest of various grasses, especially in nurseries. Other related species such as the bluegrass billbug may also be involved. Hunting and bluegrass billbugs are potential pests of Kentucky bluegrass in Maryland but are also known to attacks perennial ryegrass, fescues and timothy. There are very few records of billbugs on orchardgrass, so it is unclear why they are now infesting this grass crop. Adults are 6 to 11 mm in length, typically weevil-like in appearance with a short, fairly broad, recurved snout. The color is variable from gray to black with reddish or brown areas sometimes visible. The body surface is often coated with soil as well as a naturally pruinose, clayey coating, giving the weevil a dirty appearance. The larva is white, legless and with a brown head capsule. Eggs are sausage shaped, clear to creamy white. The female inserts 10-20 eggs individually into the stem or leaf sheath at the base of the plant.

Both species have identical one year life cycles. The adult overwinters and begins egg laying in the spring. Willards Ag Service and Terry Patton has been monitoring billbug activity in pitfall traps this spring and captures indicated that spring emergence occurred during the second and third week of April. Rod Youngman, extension entomologist at VPI, also is using degree days to predict the timing of adult emergence. Using a threshold temperature of 50 degrees Fahrenheit adult activity is first noticed at 280-352 degree-days and egg-laying beginning after 560-624 degree-days. Adults usually feed and disperse for a week or so and then begin egg laying in early May. This spring preoviposition period may be the only opportunity to control adults with an insecticide before they lay eggs. Treatments with Sevin have been applied to a number of infested fields in MD and VA but it is still too early to tell whether this will work. Since the adults are largely active in the thatch-soil interface, we question whether the insecticide spray will reach the intended targets. The adult female chews a small hole in the grass stem or leaf sheath and deposits an egg. The first instar larva stage feeds inside and hollows the stem. This feeding activity results in a light tan powder or fine sawdust like material to accumulate inside the stem. The same material is evident in the crown area where the growing larva exits into the soil.
Older larvae also feed on roots at the thatch-soil interface. The tunneling damage in the stem and crown causes the plants to brown and die. Billbug larvae are often intermixed with white grub larvae in the soil.

**Wye Strawberry & Spring Crops Twilight Tours**
*May 16, 2006*

Make plans to attend the annual **Wye Strawberry & Spring Crops Twilight Tours** on May 16, 2006 from 6-8:00 p.m. at the Wye Research and Education Center. For more information contact Debby Dant at 410 827-8056 x115.

**Maryland Horse Health & Disease Prevention Seminar**
*June 8, 2006*

Internationally recognized equine researchers and industry leaders will be giving presentations on equine related topics such as identifying illness in horses, controlling infectious diseases, myths and facts about equine vaccinations, and disease prevention measures at the first annual Maryland Horse Health and Disease Prevention Seminar. This one day event will be held on Thursday, June 8, 2006 starting at 2:00pm in the afternoon. The seminar will be held at the Laurel Racetrack and will also be broadcasted to four other satellite locations throughout the state using Centra Web Conferencing technologies. These satellite locations include Chesapeake College (Wye Mills, MD), Western Maryland Research and Education Center (Keedysville, MD), Harford Community College – Higher Education Center (Aberdeen, MD), and College of Southern Maryland (LaPlata, MD).

Veterinarians, trainers, horse breeders, horse owners, and anyone involved within Maryland’s equine industry should not miss this opportunity to learn about these important topics. All attendees will receive conference proceedings, dinner, and the opportunity to ask questions of all of our experts. Please visit our website at [www.equinestudies.umd.edu/Extension/health2006.html](http://www.equinestudies.umd.edu/Extension/health2006.html) for more details. For additional information please contact Kristen Spahn at 301-405-1392 or kspahn@umd.edu.

**Maryland Grape Growers Association Summer Field Day**
*Research Vineyard at CMREC Upper Marlboro*
*June 17, 2006*

Plan to attend the Maryland Grape Growers Association Summer Field Day at the CMREC Upper Marlboro research vineyard. This all day event is hosted by the Southern Maryland Vineyard Team and the Maryland Grape Growers Association. Private Pesticide Recertification credit will awarded for full participation.

For more details visit the Maryland Grape Growers Association website at: [http://www.marylandwine.com/mgga/](http://www.marylandwine.com/mgga/)

**Field Crops Research Twilight Barbecue & Ice Cream Social**
*CMREC, Upper Marlboro Farm*
*August 24, 2006*

You are invited to attend a twilight wagon tour of the University of Maryland Upper Marlboro Research Farm, on Thursday, August 24, 2006 from 4:30 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. Maryland Cooperative Extension will host this **Field Crops Research Twilight Barbecue & Ice Cream Social**.

Served after the barbecue, “old-fashioned” homemade ice cream! It’s “old fashioned” ice cream because we will be using a 1929 Fair-Banks Morse antique gas engine to do the cranking.

This event will highlight all field crops, agronomic and horticultural research projects currently conducted at the CMREC Upper Marlboro Farm. To register call 410 222-6759.
Sign Up for 2006-2007 Cover Crop Program to Run June 12-July 28
Harvest Option Tops New Features

MDA News Release: Sue DuPont, 410-841-5889 or Kate Wagner, 410-841-5888

A harvest option tops the list of new features available to farmers who sign up for the Maryland Department of Agriculture's 2006-2007 Maryland Cover Crop Program. Eligible farmers can receive cost-share assistance ranging from $20-$50 an acre to plant cover crops this fall to help absorb unused crop nutrients remaining in the soil after fall harvest and to act as a ground cover to keep the soil from washing away in winter. An extended signup for the statewide program begins June 12 and ends July 28, 2006 at local soil conservation district offices.

"I am pleased to announce that more than $8 million in cover crop funds will be available to farmers this fall through a combination of sources including the Chesapeake Bay Restoration Fund and a special supplement to the Department of Agriculture budget," said Governor Robert L. Ehrlich, Jr. "This funding represents a 100 percent increase over last year's cover crop budget. We are very excited to further enhance this popular program."

"In addition to the harvest option, MDA has put together a number of program enhancements to help boost participation," said Agriculture Secretary Lewis R. Riley. "Also new this year are larger acreage caps, an extended sign-up period and less paperwork to file for early planting bonuses."

The new Commodity Cover Crop Program is for farmers who want to harvest their cover crop. Up to 500 acres may be enrolled in this program. Eligible farmers must plant by November 5, 2006 to receive $20 an acre. Certain restrictions apply.

Farmers may also plant up to 1,000 acres per farm in the conventional cover crop program with unlimited stand-by acreage. Cover crop cereal grains may be planted immediately following the fall harvest of corn, soybeans, sorghum, tobacco or vegetables. Research indicates that cover crops planted in early fall provide the greatest water quality benefits. Therefore, the earlier farmers get their cover crops planted, the higher their reimbursement rate will be. Farmers who plant their cover crops by October 1 are eligible to receive $50 an acre in cost-share funding. Cost-share funding of $40 an acre is available to farmers who plant by October 15. Farmers who plant by November 5 will be eligible to receive $30 an acre in cost-share funding. MDA will offer split reimbursement payments dispersed in the fall and spring for the conventional cover crop program. All payment rates will be provided in full by MACS during the 2006-2007 planting season. An on-line application form that can be faxed to local soil conservation district offices is available on MDA's website at www.mda.state.md.us

Barley, canola, rapeseed, rye, ryegrass, spring oats, triticale, brassicas (kale) and wheat planted in the fall of 2006 are eligible. All seed used is required to meet Maryland Seed Law and Regulatory Standards and have a minimum germination rate of 80 percent. The use of non-poultry manure is permitted under certain conditions.

The 2006 Maryland Cover Crop Program is administered by the Maryland Agricultural Water Quality Cost-Share (MACS) Program. Applicants must be in good standing with MACS in order to participate and must be in compliance with the Maryland Nutrient Management Program. Requests for cover crop funds will be approved on a first come, first served basis. Additional stand-by acres in the conventional program may be approved if funds are available after regular sign-up ends. Stand-by acreage is not available in the Commodity Cover Crop Program. Farmers should contact their local soil conservation district office to enroll before the July 28 signup deadline. For more information, contact the MACS office at 410-841-5864.

R. David Myers
Extension Educator, Agriculture
May 11, 2006