

## Put cutworm on radar screen

By TOM J. BECHMAN

If there was a flag signifying black cutworm's presence, it would be black with the Jolly Roger logo on it. Like pirates of old, black cutworms show up out of nowhere. And they're ruthless feeders if left unchecked.

Thanks to the Indiana Certified Crop Advisors for providing tips on fending off these pests. This month's panelists include Greg Bossaer, Lance Murrell and George Watters.

### Crops Corner

**When do I need to scout for black cutworms? How do I scout?**

**Murrell:** Start now. Watch the Purdue University Pest & Crops Newsletter to help you track when they should start showing up in your area. Find it at [www.entm.purdue.edu/newsletters](http://www.entm.purdue.edu/newsletters).

Black cutworm doesn't overwinter

here; moths fly in from the Southwest and lay eggs on anything that's green. Check weedy or cover crop fields first. To scout, inspect 100 plants, 20 from five different areas. Control may be needed if you find two or more ½ to 1 inch worms per 100 plants and three to five plants show small pinhole leaf feeding, or if those plants are cut.

**Bossaer:** Larvae normally attack corn in growth stages VE (emergence) to V8 (eight leaf collars). Scouting recommen-



**BIG APPETITE:** Black cutworms clip plants quickly if left unchecked.

dations are available in Purdue's Corn & Soybean Field Guide, ID-179. You'll find excellent pictures on Page 60.

**Watters:** Degree days can be an effective tool to determine when to start scouting. Most universities have a trapping network established to monitor incoming moth flights. When a total of eight or more moths are trapped over a two-day period, begin accumulating growing degree days to predict egg hatch and larval development. Significant leaf feeding and/or cutting generally will not occur until 300 GDDs accumulate.

### Soybean rust watch

**How will I know if Asian soybean rust will show up? When should I look?**

**Bossaer:** USDA sentinel plots in many counties in the eastern U.S. are monitored by qualified, trained plant pathologists. Growers can keep up with rust development at [www.ppd.purdue.edu/ppdl/soybean\\_rust.html](http://www.ppd.purdue.edu/ppdl/soybean_rust.html). Also, a weekly phone message by Purdue's Greg Shaner is available at 866-458-RUST (7878). USDA's Asian soybean rust observation map featuring weekly results of the nation's sentinel plots is online at [www.sbrusa.net](http://www.sbrusa.net).

**Watters:** Currently, research indicates fungicide applications aren't needed until soybeans begin to flower. Once in the reproductive stage, soybeans should be sprayed before soybean rust appears on more than 2% of leaves in the crop canopy. Symptoms begin on lower leaves as small, tan to reddish-brown lesions, primarily on the underside of leaves. Lesions may be angular, limited by leaf veins. Mature lesions contain several small, raised pustules. A magnifying hand lens aids in seeing them. Placing suspect leaves in a plastic bag for 24 hours with a moist paper towel may cause pustules to erupt.

**Murrell:** Pathologists tell us that their early warning will be confirmed out-breaks in Texas and Louisiana, since most winds come from the southwest. They will look at weather patterns and use the movement into other states to forecast when we should start looking here. Listen for disease reports, look at fields occasionally, and call your dealer, consultant or county Extension educator if you see something you haven't seen before. Get it confirmed before spraying!



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### Crops Corner panel

- Greg Bossaer, CCA, White County Extension ag educator
- Lance Murrell, CCA, crops consultant, Idaville
- George Watters, CCA, Agrilience LLC, Noblesville, and Croplan Genetics