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Farmers should be on the alert for Armyworm infestations in crops

According to a recent article from the University of Kentucky, Spring '08 may present us with a large flush of army worms: (article edited for space and clarity)

Armyworms, which occasionally occur in large enough numbers to cause damage to pastures, hay, corn and small grains, generally appear in Kentucky in mid-May through June. In recent days, the number of armyworm moths captured in the University of Kentucky-IPM pheromone trap system has set record levels. This could set up the potential for large enough numbers of armyworms to emerge in the weeks ahead to cause crop damage.

The Princeton traps captured 600 moths per trap-week, said Doug Johnson, UK extension entomologist. While the Lexington traps caught 660 moths. This is a larger peak than in any first generation flight since UK-IPM has been keeping records, and a substantially larger number than in the outbreak years of 2001 and 2006. Calculations at the end of April indicate farmers can expect to see peak caterpillar activity for the first generation to occur around May 20 in Princeton and May 25 in Lexington.

"This is an early warning, not a prediction of catastrophe," Johnson said. "Nevertheless, I do think that we are at an increased risk of economically important infestations compared to most years. Certainly you should be scouting your grass crops." Some fields may need to be treated to control the insect. Scouting is the key to determining if a field will need to be treated.

The potential need for pest control may provide opportunity for farmers to integrate Monty's Program as a stress management option. According to Monty's CCA Joe Dedman, "If the numbers of worms in your fields do reach 'economic threshold' and will require treatment, you should use this chance to spray an extra application of Monty's 8-16-8." According to Dedman, this may provide additional growth. Further, spoon feeding your crop during any period of stress "...such as insect pressure, may help the plant recover and in some cases even resist whatever stressors it encounters." As a reminder, Monty's does offer Tank-Mix Flexibility with most common farm chemicals. During these periods of rising input costs anytime you can combine two jobs you should see benefits to your bottom line. Dedman concluded by saying, "If you're going to be in the field anyway, you might as well give your plants one more boost; that is what makes Monty's such a unique and beneficial management tool for agriculture."

For more information on armyworms or on conducting field scouting in your crops, contact your local county extension office. For additional information on Monty's line of Foliar Plant Food Products, talk to your Monty's dealer or visit www.montysplantfood.com.



Armyworm infestations could be high this summer. Here, armyworms are shown infesting a corn plant during the whorl stage of development.



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