

# Bean beetle outlook tough

NEWARK, Del. — Start mning now for Mexican beetle control in your beans. You're going to dit.

Overwintering populations this pest are the highest e've been in five years, ports University of laware extension pest anagement specialist ark Graustein. Growers do n't take proper otective action could well e early, heavy feeding on air seedling soybeans. A survey of overwintering exican bean beetle pulations in Delaware icates pressure will be eatest from south of the nal down through Milford d Greenwood, with one olated hot spot down ound Angola.

In view of this forecast, raustein advises growers prepare themselves now r some form of MBB ntrol.

They have three alter- tives: plant a snap bean p crop; monitor fields utinely and spray for MBB en economic levels of estation are reached; or ke an at-planting pication of a systemic n- cticide.

The pest management eciatist considers use of a stemic the least tisfatory of these ternatives for several asons. For one thing, stemics only last for about r weeks

This means that though ey'll give you early ntrol (which will be itical this year), once ey've worn off, your crop vulnerable to a new n- station. With the heavy essure forecast, you may ell need to spray later on if ou go this route.

Another disadvantage to ystemics for MBB control is at though they will control rrips and leaf hoppers as ell, none of the materials abeled for this use will ontrol green clover worm, rasshoppers, Japanese ettles and other defoliators r pod-feeding worms.

Currently there are three ystemic insecticides abeled for MBB control on oyebeans: Thumet, Disyston, nd Temk. Besides early ean beetle control, Temk

will also provide some nematode and some early mite suppression, but this suppression is only temporary.

There's also some evidence that certain systemics can aggravate a mite problem in soybeans during dry weather, though entomologists don't yet understand why.

Your other two choices for MBB control in soybeans are to use a trap crop or to routinely monitor fields and spray when beetle populations reach the economic level.

The pest management specialist strongly recommends using a snap bean trap crop because when handled properly this is by far the cheapest and most effective way to achieve MBB control over the entire growing season. This method should only be used in fields with a history of MBB pressure or in areas where the overwintering population is high as indicated by beetle activity last fall.

The trap crop method takes advantage of the fact that the MBB, when given a choice, prefers to feed on snap beans rather than soybeans

The system involves planting six to eight rows of snap beans along two edges of each field at least a week before soybeans are seeded so that when overwintering adult beetles emerge from the woods and brush bordering fields, they'll be attracted to the snap bean foliage. As long as there's any of this to feed on, they won't move into the adjacent soybeans

Concentrated thus in a small area rather than spread out over an entire field, the beetles are much easier and cheaper to control. There are four different ways to deal with the MBB in your trap crop. You can treat it with a systemic at planting. You can treat it with a foliar insecticide when the first MBB larvae hatch out. You can disk the trap crop under after MBB larvae hatch out and overwintering adults have started to die off around the

first week in July. Or you can use a parasitic insect, Pedobius, which kills MBB by laying its eggs in beetle larvae.

Graustein prefers this last control in the trap cr because it's a biological method which requires no chemicals and no extra energy investment on the part of the grower.

It also has the advantage of long-term control. Once the trap crop has been

defoliated or has matured and died off, Pedobius will continue to follow the beetle and parasitize it as it moves into the soybeans. And by this time the crop should be far enough along to tolerate some defoliation without affecting yields.

With the parasite you don't run the risk of having late-season economic damage from MBB — something which sometimes happens with other systems when there is heavy pressure from this pest.

How can Graustein be so sure the parasite will do its job? "We've been demonstrating its effectiveness

since 1975 in trap crops around the state," he explains. The only time it hasn't worked is when the trap crop isn't managed as prescribed.

What kind of savings can you realize with a trap crop? A one-acre trap crop effective for control of MBB in a 50-acre soybean field will cost less than \$150. This compares with \$500 or more, \$10-\$12 an acre, to spray the entire field, or \$480, \$8-\$9 an acre, to apply a systemic on the soybean field at planting.

Growers interested in learning more about trap cropping can find out how it's done from Delaware

extension bulletin No. E33. This is available at county extension offices in Newark, Dover and Georgetown.

Graustein is also preparing a one-page leaflet which outlines the steps for planting a trap crop.

If you would like to use parasites in combination with a trap crop MBB control in your soybeans next summer, let your county agent know exactly how many trap crops you intend to have. That way enough parasites can be raised now for later release. Get your order in as soon as possible—but certainly before April 15



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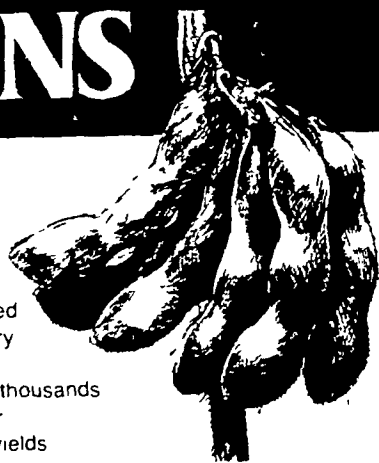
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