

# Maryland survey to determine corn cyst nematode control

BELTSVILLE — Agricultural officials from the Maryland and U.S. Departments of Agriculture are conducting a statewide survey to determine the extent of the corn cyst nematode, a newly discovered foreign corn pest in Maryland.

The officials also will determine what measures are needed to suppress and control the pest, said Harvey Ford, deputy administrator of USDA's Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service.

An emergency quarantine is not necessary now, Ford said.

The pest, a minute worm, was first found in Pakistan and first described in scientific literature in 1970, Ford said. Its Latin name is "Heterodera zea."

Ford said he approved the survey as one of several measures to deal with the new pest after it was discovered in four Kent County, Md., corn fields in February.

Ford said the corn cyst nematode is primarily a pest of maize, although it also attacks wheat, oats, barley, and sorghum. The nematode infests the soil and the host plant, reducing yields.

During the adult phase of its cycle, it forms cysts in the soil. These cysts can be spread from one area to another when soil clings to harvested plants, plant parts, equipment, containers or vehicles, Ford said.

Although the potential for further spread of the pest isn't known, state authorities have asked voluntary cooperation of affected landowners, Ford said.

The Maryland infestation was identified by A. Morgan Golden, a

research nematologist at USDA's Beltsville, Md., Agricultural Research Center. Soil samples were collected by Lorin Krusberg, University of Maryland, and Michael Goff of the Maryland Department of Agriculture.

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