

Rescue plan still best for corn borers

LANCASTER — Corn borers have long been a problem, but in 1983 they suddenly became much more serious. A survey of county extension agents in 17 states last winter found that of 435 agents responding, 360 ranked corn borer as a major problem in '83. That number was higher than any other

insect, including corn rootworm, which was mentioned only 249 times by the agents.

But despite the increased threat presented by corn borers, most insect specialists still recommend waiting until they hit before trying to treat for them.

Bill Pagano of Stauffer Chemical Company says that of the two methods of controlling corn borer, planting-time and rescue treatment, the rescue treatment is the best. Planting-time treatment, Pagano says, requires three times the normal rate of insecticide to control the borers.

"That is simply not the best approach, because it's uncertain whether corn borers will even be a problem in any particular field," he asserts.

Instead, he suggests a planting-time treatment with an insecticide like Dyfonate at normal rates to control insects such as rootworms and cutworms. The insecticide can be applied again, over the top, if borers infest the field.

He says careful surveillance can be used to spot corn borers in plenty of time to prevent serious damage. This involves monitoring moth traps to determine when the borers are likely to be laying eggs, then checking fields for egg masses. A commonly used economic threshold for treatment is one egg mass per plant, or when

50 percent of the plants have some feeding damage showing.

Pagano says the time to worry about corn borer is in early June when the temperature is consistently warm at night. The moths are likely to be flying and laying their eggs on those nights when the wind is calm and the humidity is high.

Over-the-top treatment at that time will effectively stop first-generation damage but there is a chance that a second or third generation infestations of the borers might develop. If that happens the situation gets more complex but with careful planning Pagano says damage can be kept to a minimum.

The principal threat that second-generation borers presents is to the ear shanks. They burrow into the shanks, weakening them and causing the ears to drop to the ground. Because the second-generation threat can last over a two or three week period, it is sometimes economical to treat twice for them, Pagano says. That means careful monitoring of the fields so that the applications are timed to do the most good.

Pagano says that corn borers can be a serious problem and if 1983 is any indicator, 1984 could be bad. But with a carefully timed insecticide program, the borers can be held in check and damage kept to a minimum.

Egg Board changes

PARK RIDGE, Ill. — The American Egg Board has recommended to Secretary of Agriculture John R. Block that changes be made in the number of members representing four of the six AEB areas beginning in 1985. The action was taken at the Board's recent meeting held in the Chicago area.

According to Board Chairman Edward L. Houston, of National Poultry and Foods, Inc., the recommendation was made as a result of changing geographical production trends.

The recommended changes are as follows:

South Atlantic Region - Decreased from four members to three.

South Central Region -

Decreased from four members to three.

East North Central Region - Increased from two members to three.

Western Region - Increased from three members to four.

The North Atlantic and West North Central regions would remain the same with three members and two members respectively.

The USDA will notify AEB of the Secretary's decision on the matter, with any action taking place when USDA appoints new members and alternates in 1985.

The Board consists of 18 members in six areas. The number of members in each area is based on the percentage of national egg production represented by the area.

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