

Md. checks for new plant pests

ANNAPOLIS, Md. — The Maryland Department of Agriculture (MDA), in cooperation with the University of Maryland and the U.S. Department of Agriculture's National Plant Pest Survey and Detection Program, recently initiated a survey and detection program designed to determine the possible presence of

three serious plant insect pests. None of the three is known to exist in the State at the present time but they could easily survive if accidentally introduced.

The first such pest is the western corn rootworm beetle. The beetle is a severe problem in the midwest corn belt and has been slowly migrating eastward. It was

recently detected in the states of Ohio and Pennsylvania. The insect can cause significant yield reductions in continuous corn acreage. MDA has set about 170 insect traps throughout the State to check on its presence.

The second pest is the plum fruit moth. This insect occurs throughout Europe and the

southern U.S.S.R. It is now known to exist in the United States but, should it be introduced, it could adapt to the Maryland climate. It has the widest host range of the three insects under consideration and attacks, in addition to the plum, cherries, apples, peaches, apricots, pears and walnuts. The caterpillar of the moth bores into

twigs. It may also bore into fruit later in the season causing fruit drop. Fifty traps have been set in the major peach producing counties of Maryland for this pest.

Last, but not least, is the summer fruit tortrix. This pest occurs in western Europe but, like the plum fruit moth, it could survive Maryland's climate. It is a pest of apples and pears and causes damage in the caterpillar stage when it feeds on leaves and fruit. Fruit losses of up to 20 percent have been recorded in Germany as a result of the activities of the summer fruit tortrix. Fifty traps for the tortrix have been set in major apple producing counties.

MDA cautions that setting of these traps for the surveys is not a cause for alarm on the part of State agriculturists. There is no indication that any one of these pests currently exist in the State. "It's just a matter of safety first" says Steve Malan of MDA's Plant Protection Section. "Many agricultural pest infestations can be eliminated or at least controlled if discovered early. But when they go undetected and unchecked for long periods of time, control may be impossible" he concluded.

Pa's harvest of bounty moves ahead

HARRISBURG — Sweet corn, tomatoes, snap beans, peaches and squash headed the list of crops being harvested by Pennsylvania farmers during the week ending August 5, 1984. The week was excellent for farm fieldwork and six days were rated suitable by farmers according to the Pennsylvania Crop Reporting Service.

Farm activities included harvesting of fruits, vegetables, wheat and oats; making hay; spraying alfalfa stands; and clipping pastures.

Topsoil moisture supplies in the commonwealth were rated short by four percent of farm reporters, adequate by 89 percent and surplus by seven percent. The northern region reported 90 percent adequate and ten percent surplus, and 100 percent of the central reporters considered soil moisture as adequate. Twelve percent of the southern reporters gave a short rating for soil moisture, 75 percent reported adequate supplies, and 13 percent reported soil moisture to be surplus.

Statewide, 44 percent of the corn crop was silked and six percent was in the dough stage. Last year at this time, 48 percent was silked with less than five percent in

dough. The northern region reported 19 percent silked, the central region had 51 percent of their corn in silk and the southern region reported 58 percent of the corn is silked and 12 percent in the dough stage.

Seventy-seven percent of Pennsylvania wheat was reported as harvested. At this time last year, 88 percent of the crop was harvested. The northern region reported 42 percent harvested, the central region had a harvest level of 75 percent and the wheat harvest in the southern region was virtually complete.

The barley harvest was virtually complete, on a par with last year.

Pennsylvania oats were reported

as 24 percent harvested, trailing the 38 percent harvested a year ago. The northern section's harvest was less than five percent complete and the central section was eight percent harvested. In the south, 51 percent of the oat crop was harvested.

The potato harvest got underway as five percent of the crop was harvested, ahead of last year's less than five percent harvested. The northern and southern regions each had five percent of the crop harvested while the central region reported less than five percent harvested.

In the commonwealth's orchards, less than two percent of the apple crop was harvested, while

peaches were reported as 13 percent harvested. Producers are also harvesting sweet corn, squash, snap beans and tomatoes.

The second cutting of alfalfa was 59 percent complete, behind last year's level of 78 percent. The third cutting of alfalfa was reported as six percent complete, behind last year's 13 percent cutting. The second cutting of clo-tim was reported as 32 percent complete, ahead of last year's 27 percent. The quality of hay made was considered poor by four percent, fair by 46 percent and good by 50 percent of the reporters. The amount of feed obtained from pastures was rated mostly average to above average.



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