

Lay-by insecticide treatment controls rootworm

Corn growers expecting trouble from the ravenous rootworm this season may be better off bypassing traditional at-planting treatments of granular insecticides, says a university entomologist.

Instead, he says, consider piggybacking a liquid formulation of a labeled insecticide with nitrogen solution and banding them together at lay-by (cultivation).

"We've always known that lay-by treatments, if properly timed, would give as good and often better control than traditional at-planting treatments," says Dr. Marlin

Bergman of Purdue University.

"It's just that now, with more and more corn growers banding liquid N at cultivation to improve fertilizer efficiency, we have a new and possibly better opportunity to get the job done. One provides a free ride for the other."

In the Corn Belt and mid-Atlantic states, where rootworm infestations have been most pronounced, larvae usually begin feeding in early to mid-June and continue up until late July.

Most rootworm insecticides applied at planting today remain active in the soil up to 12 weeks, usually long enough to hold larvae in check until mid-summer, when they stop feeding. However, Bergman says, several uncontrollable environmental conditions including microbial activity in the soil or heavy rains could cause at-planting treatments to lose their punch before larvae finish feasting on plant roots.

"In recent years, many corn growers have been disappointed with the performance of their at-

planting insecticide treatments," Bergman notes. "Applying the insecticide closer to the time of its actual need could well be the solution to this puzzling problem."

Lay-by treatments also let the corn growers evaluate the quality of their stand before investing in a rootworm insecticide, says Dr. John Clapp, a research agronomist for Arcadian Corporation who has been working with Bergman to evaluate insecticide/fertilizer treatments.

"If bad weather wipes out your crop, you may have to replant or go with soybeans instead," he says. "That alone is a strong case for applying both your insecticide and some of your nitrogen after crop emergence. It's good insurance, and it gives you better cash flow."

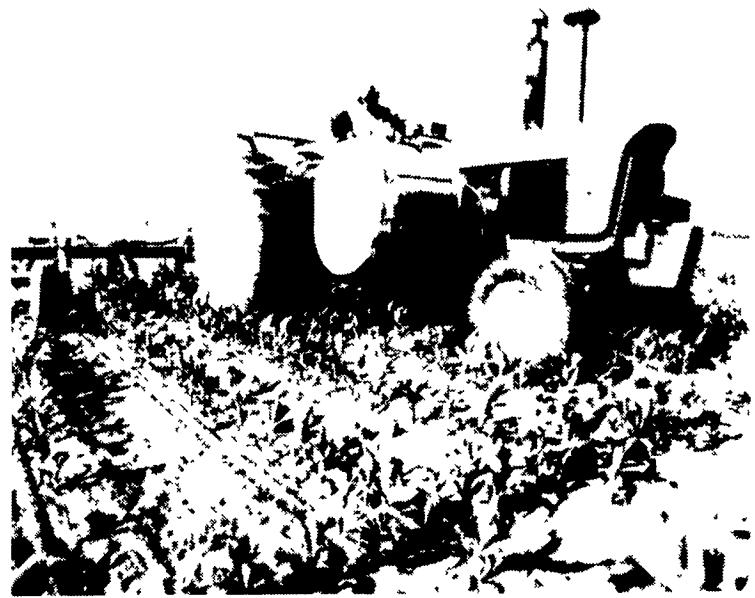
The key to this control program's success, says Bergman, is to apply the insecticide/fertilizer tank mix shortly before larvae start feeding, usually not later than the first week of June. The

tank mix should be applied in a seven-inch band at the base of the corn plant. The cultivator shovel

would then throw soil over it and prevent any chemical losses to volatilization.



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Rootworm insecticide can be applied efficiently with the banding of N solution at cultivation.

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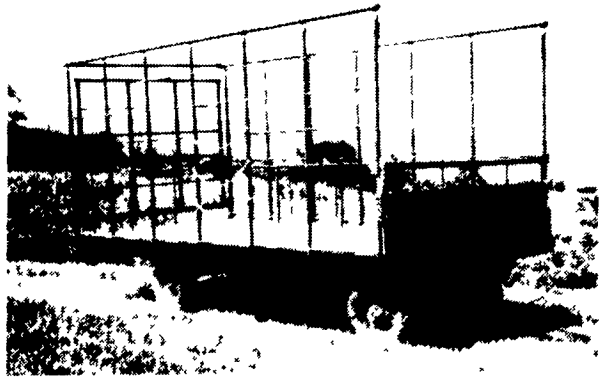
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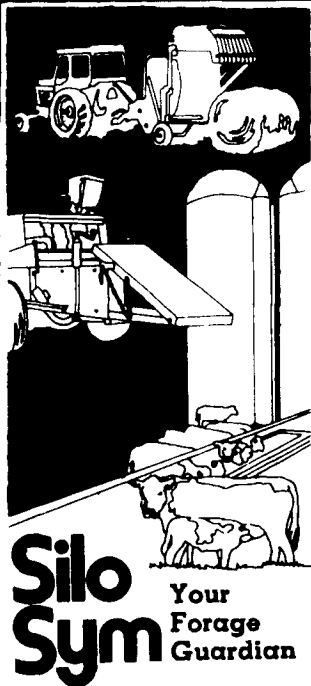
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