CORN

MANITOBA CROP ALLIANCE

LATE SEASON INSECT PESTS

Late season insect pests will begin feeding in the very late vegetative growth stages, all the way up to the reproductive dent stage (R5), when the grain is more starch than milk.

PHOTO: JOHN GAVLOSKI, MANITOBA AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

TWOSPOTTED SPIDER MITES

Adult mites: 0.3 – 0.4 mm long, pale yellow, green, orange, to brown and have two pigmented spots that are visible from above.

Mites bite into leaf cell walls and suck out the contents, yielding leaf yellowing, necrotic leaves, sandblasted appearance, stunted plants.

Consider control when 15 – 20% of leaf area is covered by spider mite colonies, moderate damage is noted and hot, dry conditions are expected to continue. Thresholds are rarely met on corn due to plant size.

TOP: TWO-STRIPED GRASSHOPPER, BOTTOM: CLEARWINGED GRASSHOPPER.
PHOTO: JOHN GAVLOSKI, MANITOBA AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

GRASSHOPPERS

Grasshoppers will feed on corn at any stage but are more common during reproductive corn growth stages. They move in from field edges, but as adults, can travel long distances, quickly. Adult grasshoppers commonly feed on corn leaves but may also feed on the silks and ear tips. Crop damage is likely to be greatest in years when dry weather accompanies high populations. Reduced natural vegetation, from drought conditions, can force grasshoppers to move to cultivated crops.

Assess grasshopper levels early in the season along field margins. If grasshoppers are noted around fields, walk into corn fields past the end-rows, checking for grasshopper activity.

ABOVE: EUROPEAN CORN BORER EGG MASS, RIGHT: EUROPEAN CORN BORER LARVA.
PHOTOS: MORGAN COTT, MANITOBA CROP ALLIANCE

EUROPEAN CORN BORER (ECB)

Adult moths: tan with brown markings on wings.

Eggs: egg masses consist of 10-40 white eggs, overlapped, resembling fish scales. 24 hrs prior to hatching, eggs have black appearance caused by the dark heads of larvae.

Larvae: appearance varies with first instars being cream-white with black heads and later instars ranging from cream to gray, with several black spots.

Yield loss is primarily from stalk tunnelling, which can restrict nutrient flow, resulting in smaller cobs. Tunnelling in stalks and ear shanks increases risk of stalk breakage and dropped ears. If larvae have not begun boring into plants, insecticides can be economical where levels are above threshold.

LATE SEASON INSECT PESTS

PHOTO: JOHN GAVLOSKI, MANITOBA AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

CORN EARWORM

Larvae: 1.5" long and range from pale green, brown to nearly black with distinct stripes running down their bodies.

Adult moths: 1.5" wingspan and tan in colour. Front wings have irregular, wavy dark marking at back and brown "comma-shaped" dot in the middle.

Insecticide is usually not economical in grain corn, however sweet corn may need an application while fresh silks are present.

PHOTO: JOHN GAVLOSKI, MANITOBA AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

FOURSPOTTED SAP BEETLE

Adult beetles: 1/4" long, shiny black with four tan to orange spots on their backs.

Beetles are attracted to fermenting pollen on corn silks and may bore into corn kernels initially injured by insects or birds.

Fourspotted sap beetle is not considered a major economic concern in field corn but can be quite noticeable in years when they are abundant.

PHOTO: JOHN GAVLOSKI, MANITOBA AGRICULTURE AND RESOURCE DEVELOPMENT

NORTHERN CORN ROOTWORM (CRW)

Adult beetles: about 1/4" long and tan to pale green in colour.

In first-year corn, management in the following year's corn crop is recommended if counts average 2+ adults per plant. For continuous corn, management in the following year's corn crop is recommended if counts average 3+ adults per plant.

Crop rotation is the primary management strategy for control of Northern CRW. Corn roots and some grasses are the only source of nutrition for CRW larvae and they cannot travel far in search of food. Some cultivars of Bt corn are resistant to feeding by corn rootworm.
See **www.cornpest.ca/bt-corn** for a list.

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