



Scouting for Fall Armyworm

Pest Importance

- Fall armyworm, *Spodoptera frugiperda*, is a minor pest of corn in the United States.
- Economic damage is sporadic from year to year.
- Fields at highest risk from injury are:
 1. Fields planted to non-Bt hybrids without Lepidoptera control
 2. Fields in the southern U.S. and Texas
 3. Late-planted fields
 4. Late-maturing hybrids



Early-stage fall armyworm larva



Whorl-stage corn injury from fall armyworm

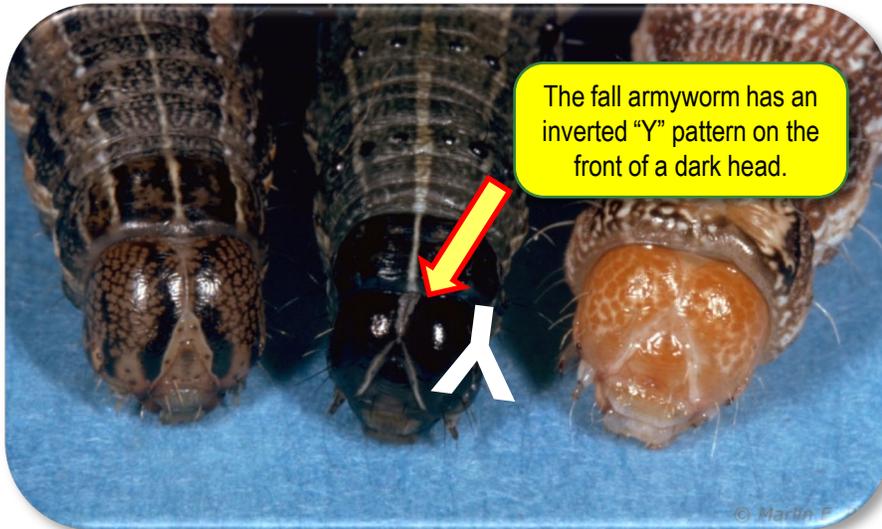
Injury Symptoms in Whorl-Stage Corn

- Early-stage larval feeding:
 - Causes “window pane” and shot holes in leaves
- Late-stage larval feeding:
 - Causes elongate, ragged holes (see photo)
 - May cut leaves in half
 - Injures developing tassel in VT stage
 - Plugs whorl with wet, yellowish-brown frass

Scouting for Fall Armyworm

- Only larvae in whorl-stage corn can be controlled with insecticides; larvae in corn ears are protected
- Scout for larvae in whorl-stage corn:
 1. Select 20 consecutive plants in a row.
 2. Inspect plants for feeding injury.
 3. Confirm identity of pest species as fall armyworm.
 4. Repeat 20-plant sample at four additional locations.
 5. Determine percent infestations based on 100 plants.
 6. Consider insecticide application when 20% of whorl-stage plants are infested with live larvae.

Identification of Fall Armyworm



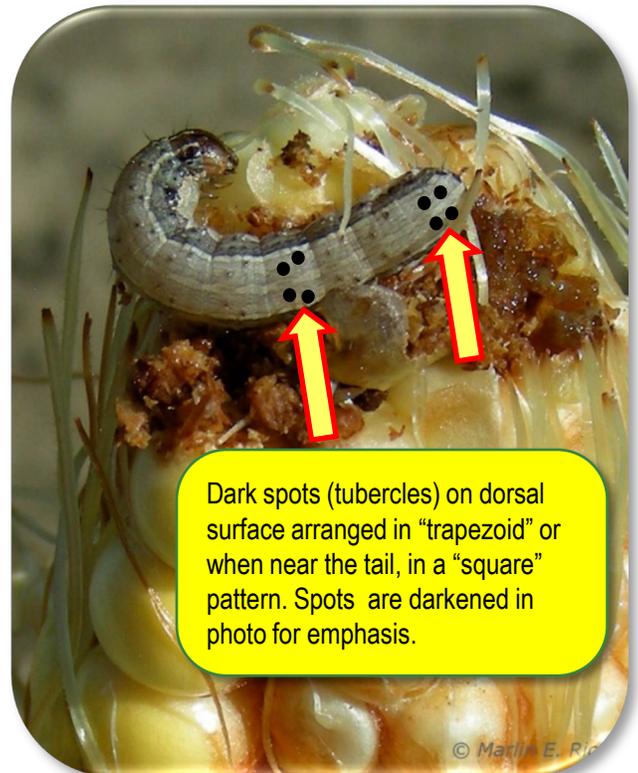
Fall armyworms can be distinguished from similar corn caterpillars by two physical characteristics:

1. Inverted "Y" pattern on the front of a dark head (left and bottom left photos)
2. Dark spots (tubercles) on dorsal surface arranged in "square" or "trapezoid" pattern (photo below)

Similar caterpillar species found on corn (left-right):
armyworm, fall armyworm and corn earworm



An inverted "Y" pattern on the front of a dark head identifies the fall armyworm.



Photos and Text

Marlin E. Rice; Reviewed by Susan Moser, Herb Eichenseer and Laura Higgins

Reference

Bessin, Ric. 2003. Fall armyworm in corn. University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. ENTFACT-110.