



## 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

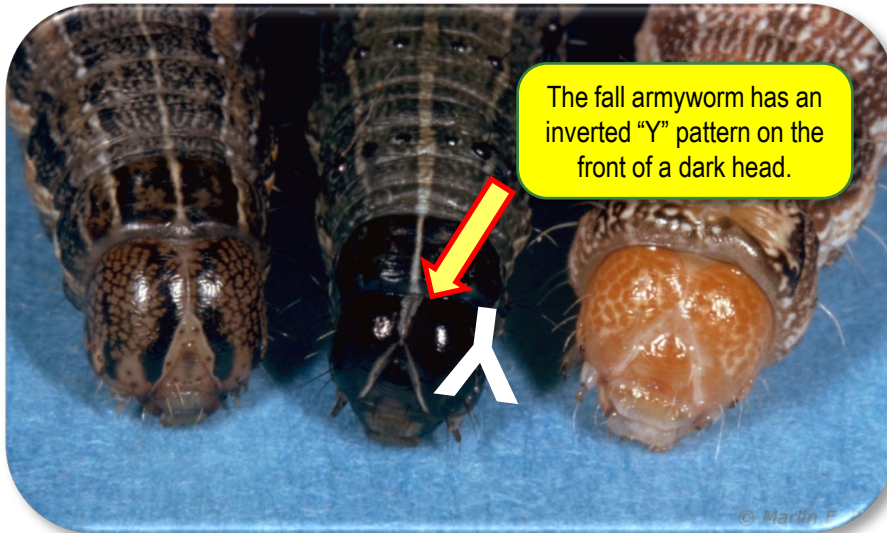
### Injury Symptoms in Whorl-Stage Corn

- 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

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- 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



The fall armyworm has an inverted "Y" pattern on the front of a dark head.

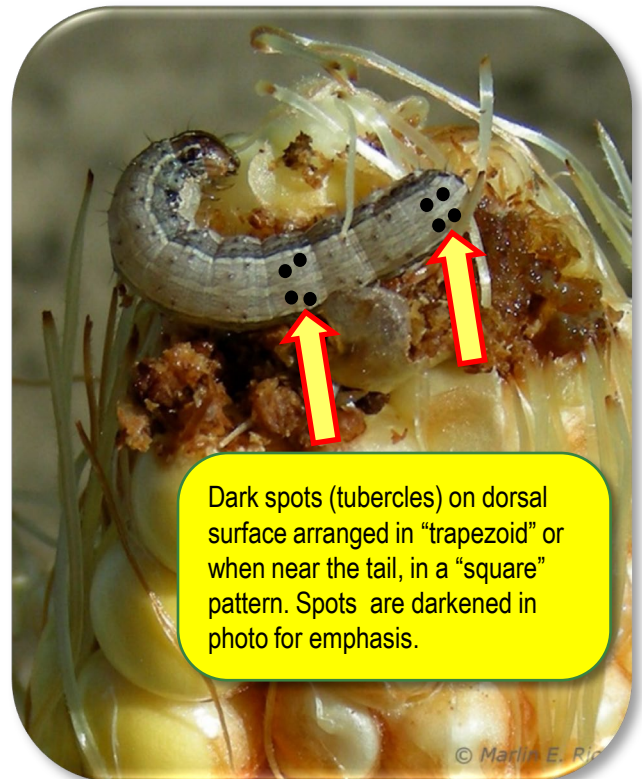
Fall armyworms can be distinguished from similar corn caterpillars by two physical characteristics:

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.



Dark spots (tubercles) on dorsal surface arranged in "trapezoid" or when near the tail, in a "square" pattern. Spots are darkened in photo for emphasis.

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### Photos and Text

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### Reference

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