Black Cutworm

Pest Facts and Impact on Crop

- **Latin name:** *Agrotis ipsilon*
- The black cutworm is the major cutworm of the Corn Belt – similar species are found worldwide.
- Black cutworms eat many plants, including corn, cotton, tobacco, vegetables, weeds and turf grasses.

Pest ID

- Key characteristics:
  - Adult forewings with dagger-shaped marking and kidney-shaped spot
  - Larvae are black/grey and grow to 1 5/8 inches
- Related/confused species:
  - Sandhill cutworm
  - Armyworm
  - Glassy cutworm
  - Dingy cutworm
  - Bronzed cutworm
  - Variegated cutworm
  - Black cutworm

Pest Symptoms

- Small larvae chew holes in leaves.
- Fourth stage or older larvae exceed the width of a dime in length, and can begin cutting V1 to V5 stage plants.
- Drilling into V6-V8 stage plants can kill growing point.
- Cutting mostly above ground in wet soil, mostly below ground in dry soil.

Recovery after being cut above the growing point.

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Management
• Favorable conditions for pest occurrence would be spring storms prior to tillage and planting delivering moths to the area
  • Monitor moth flight reports
  • Kill existing vegetation nine or more days prior to planting to reduce larval survival
  • Natural enemies are generally birds and other predators, though they’re not usually effective
• IPM practices
  • Pheromone trapping is used to determine when the pest is present
  • Intensively scout fields that are at risk
  • Reduced tillage or other practices that leave a food source for the young larvae increase risk
  • Insecticide seed treatments at high rates may give some control, but lower rates are not as effective
  • Broadcast pesticide or bait application may be used as a rescue treatment

Management with Pioneer Products
• Transgenic control
  • Herculex® I and Herculex® XTRA hybrids provide very good control of black cutworm -- control of other species may vary