



Crop Insects *in* Kansas

Holly N. Davis, Ph.D

R. Jeff Whitworth, Ph.D

Phillip E. Sloderbeck, Ph.D



Kansas State University Agricultural Experiment Station
and Cooperative Extension Service

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Corn

Many insects may attack corn at any stage — from seed-infesting all the way to physiological maturity. Even as growers wait for plants to sufficiently dry so harvest can be accomplished, yield may still be lost due to prior feeding by stalk-boring insects, causing plants to lodge before harvest. However, with the widespread use of seed treatments, crop rotation, Bt varieties, and the understanding of successful management strategies for most corn pests, producers can avoid major losses to insects and have done so relatively successfully for many years.

Armyworm

Mythimna unipuncta (Haworth)

Larvae attack all types of grass crops including small grains and corn, and when under stress they may feed on many other plants. When nearing maturity, armyworm larvae are 1½ to 2 inches long. Larval head capsules have honeycomb-like markings, and the body lacks obvious hairs. Overall body coloration varies, but is usually greenish-black with two alternating dark and orange stripes running lengthwise down each side plus a light or faint white line on the back. Larvae pupate just below the soil surface. Pupae are dark brown and about ¾ inch long. Moths are pale brown to grayish brown with a single small white spot on each forewing.

Biology: The armyworm is said to overwinter in a variety of stages including late instar larvae, pupae, and adults. In the spring, adults deposit eggs where grass is lush, often in low-lying areas on wheat or pasture ground. Field margins or fields with dense growths of grassy weeds also are preferred egg-laying sites. There can be two to three generations per year.



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