

Hudson Valley Research Laboratory
Department of Entomology

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● Agricultural Research and Extension on Tree Fruits and Vegetables ●

Sweet Corn Pest Report

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Hudson Valley: The sweet corn lepidopteran complex of insects were captured in New Paltz and Warwick traps this week. Generally, fewer insects were captured throughout the season in Warwick sweet corn fields. CEW captures in the Hudson Valley (New Paltz) are averaging 0.4 per day, requiring growers to be on a 6-day schedule; second generation European corn borer (ECB) adult captures are declining, Fall armyworm (FAW) adult captures has seen a dramatic increase in the Hudson Valley with traps at 3.3 per day, and the newly invasive Western Bean Cutworm (WBC) adult has remained quite low for the season, with numbers declining sharply last week.



We began captures of the **western bean cutworm**, *Striacosta albicosta*, (WBC) in both Warwick and New Paltz in late July. To date no treatment is required for this insect this season. Scouting for eggs should continue in the upper 4 leaves of late whorl and early tassel-emergence as these fields during this stage of development are most at risk. Egg masses can be found even if no trap captures are observed. Cumulative trap catches of 100 moths should signal intensified scouting in fields nearing silk, **HOWEVER**, we have not seen trap captures of that volume in our trap sites. Threshold set in Ohio for fresh market sweet corn is 1%. Upon hatch, larvae will spend a few days feeding on the tassel before moving down to the ear. Most insecticide sprays used to control ECB will also control WBC.

Western NY: [Marion Zuefle reports](#) that the second flight of European corn borer has declined over the past two weeks, with only five WNY trap sites reporting European corn borer-E (ECB-E) and seven sites with ECB-Z. Corn earworm (CEW) was reported from 6 sites with three sites requiring a 5 or 6 day spray interval (see chart below). Fall armyworm (FAW) numbers continue to increase with one site, Pavilion, catching a total of 72 moths. Several reports of FAW damage and have seen feeding damage in several of the fields. Ten sites reported Western bean cutworm (WBC), but overall numbers continue to decrease.

Eastern Long Island: E. LI. has very high FAW populations of 18.9 adults per day in Mattituck using green bucket traps. CEW are below threshold averaging between 1.7 and 8.0 per day with Mattituck on a 4-day schedule.

Corn Earworm adults (*Helicoverpa zea*).



Across the region: Highest captures of CEW are in west central PA with daily trap captures at 11.4 per day in Blair County, Holidaysburg, PA.

Scouting should be ongoing in fields that are in the whorl and silk stage for the presence of all three major insect pests. A five - six day spray interval is recommended when the weekly trap catch of CEW's is less than seven (see chart below).

Field scouting: Check plants in a V or X pattern across the field in groups of 10. Avoid checking only field edges, and start at random, not only where you can see damage. A plant is infested if at least one caterpillar is found. With the high numbers of FAW's, field scouting should include looking for the presence of FAW egg masses. Egg masses consist of 50 – 150 eggs and can be distinguished from the ECB by the fine hairs covering the egg mass (See photo below).



Western Bean Cutworm Adult

Whorl and tassel stage: Typical examples of ECB feeding damage in the whorl stage are straight line pinholes as well as “window pane” damage. CEW and FAW larvae will leave ragged feeding holes in the leaves with large dark frass pellets (see photo below). ECB feeding on the tassel is usually accompanied by white or light brown frass the size of fine sand.

Silk Stage: When scouting fields that are in the silk stage, look for signs of larvae feeding and frass on the silk, around the ear, and in between the ear and the stalk. Pull the ear just slightly away from the stalk to look for signs of feeding or entry (see photo below). Egg masses can be found in the ear zone area on the underside of the leaves, the flag leaves on the ear, and on the husk. ECB egg masses are white when first laid and then turn cream colored after a few days. The ECB egg mass will develop “black heads” just before the larvae hatch (see photo below). FAW egg masses will be covered with gray scales and have the appearance of a small (about ¼”) piece of lint (see photo below). CEW adults lay their eggs individually on the silk and are very difficult spot. Using the CEW pheromone trap chart below will help in determining the spray schedule.

If 15% or more of plants are infested with sweet corn pest damage, a control is needed.

Average Corn Earworm Pheromone Catch

<u>Per Day</u>	<u>Per Five Days</u>	<u>Per Week</u>	<u>Days Between Sprays</u>
<0.2	<1.0	<1.4	No Spray (for CEW)
0.2-0.5	1.0-2.5	1.4-3.5	6 days
0.5-1.0	2.5-5.0	3.5-7.0	5 days
1-13	5-65	7-91	4 days
over 13	over 65	over 91	3 days



ECB feeding on emerging tassel



Fall armyworm egg mass



CEW and FAW feeding damage



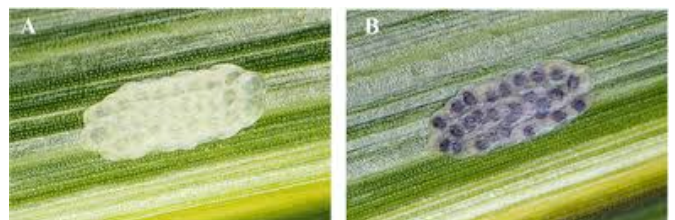
Fall armyworm larva, note the prominent inverted "Y" on the head capsule.



WBC egg mass (early stage)

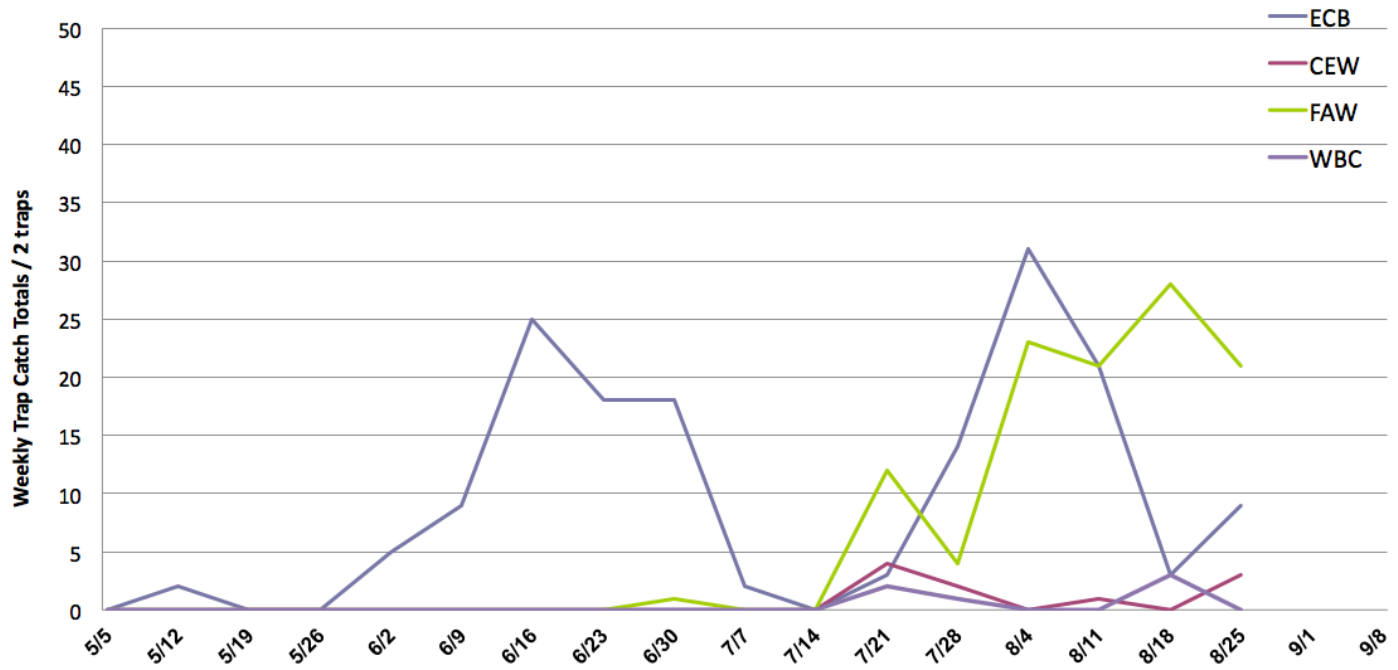


WBC eggs (late stage)

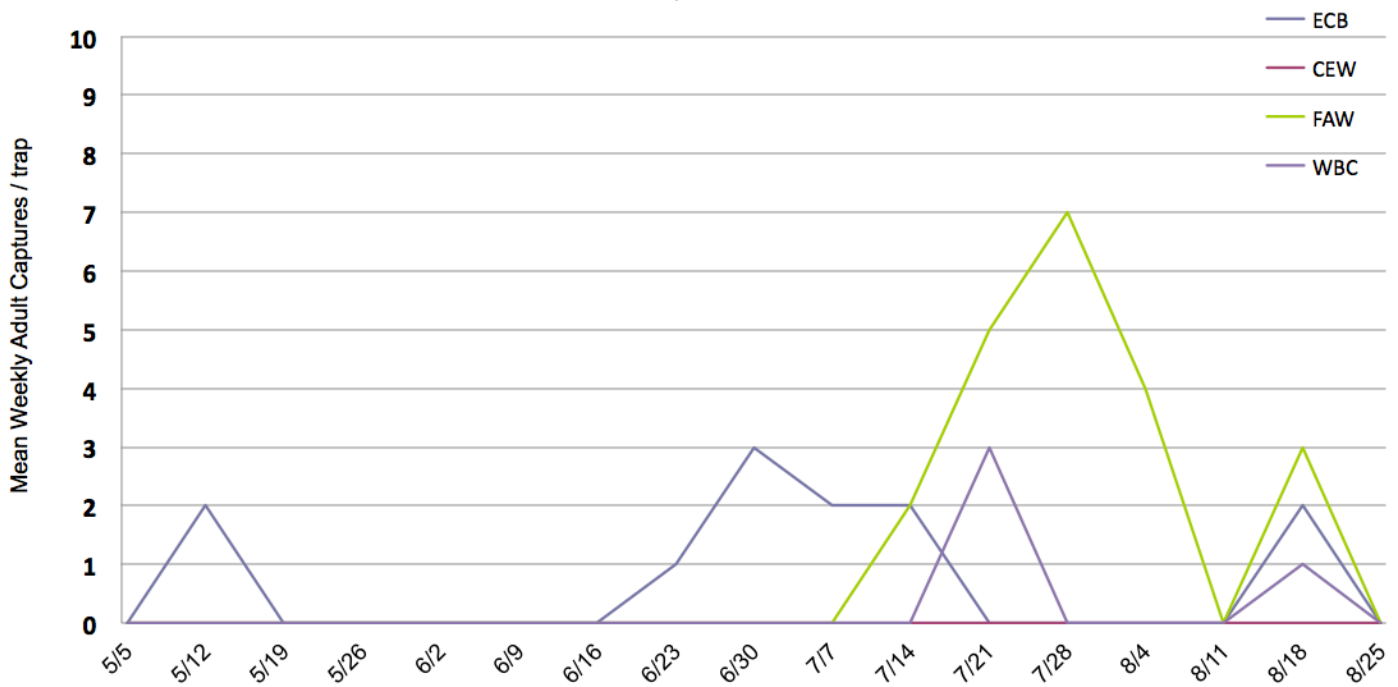


ECB egg masses (early and late stage)

**European corn borer (ECB), Fall Armyworm (FAW), and
Corn Earworm (CEW) and Western Bean Cutworm (WBC) Adult Flight Data
New Paltz, NY - 2014**



**European corn borer (ECB), Fall Armyworm (FAW), and
Corn Earworm (CEW) and Western Bean Cutworm (WBC) Adult Flight Data
Warwick, NY - 2014**



**European corn borer (ECB), Fall Armyworm (FAW), and
Corn Earworm (CEW) and Western Bean Cutworm (WBC) Adult Flight Data
Western NY - 2014**

