Purdue Cooperative Extension Service July 25, 2008 - Issue 17

In This Issue

Insects, Mites, And Nematodes

Lower Rootworm Beetle Numbers Now, Lower Larval Risk Later – (*John Obermeyer and Larry Bledsoe*)

- Statewide, rootworm and Japanese beetle numbers are lower.
- Cool, wet spring not only hurt the crop but insects as well.
- Less beetles will lay fewer eggs and reduce the impact on next year's corn.
- Pollen sources, e.g., weeds or late-corn, may be a "trap" crop for beetles.
- Indiscriminate tank-mixing of insecticide with fungicides applications not a good idea.

Reports of low numbers of rootworm and Japanese beetles continue to be received throughout much of the state. Certainly this is good news for the many cornfields now actively pollinating, as silk feeding shouldn't be hindered. Consider this low beetle year as a lower risk to next year's corn roots.

It is evident now the impact of the spring's cool and wet soils had on the immature stages of the rootworm and Japanese beetles. Pest managers have called from areas of the state almost concerned for the anemic beetle numbers being found in cornfields. Whether from actual drowning, i.e., anaerobic soil conditions, hindered larval movement to find food, or increased insect disease pathogens flourishing during the damp conditions, there was higher than normal mortality of these pests.

More than anything, rootworm beetles love pollen from corn or weeds

Consider that fewer beetles will lay fewer eggs for next year. Specifically with the western corn rootworm variant, areas of the state that have been on the fringe of damage will likely have little to no root-feeding problems for next year. Other than low rates of seed-applied insecticides for