



Corn earworm monitoring in commercial sweet corn fields in Virginia – 2017

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Corn earworm is the most important pest attacking sweet corn in Virginia. Monitoring moth catch numbers in pheromone-baited *Heliothis* traps can help guide pest management decision making and reduce the number of insecticide sprays needed. In general trap catch less than 1 moth per night means relatively low pest pressure and sprays can probably be spaced 5-6 days apart during silking. However, a catch of >1 or >13 moths per night means moderate and high pest pressure, respectively and a more frequent spray interval is justified. In 2017, we monitored 25 sweet corn fields from 12 Virginia counties. Moth trap catch numbers from around the state were posted weekly throughout the summer on the VA Ag Pest Advisory website <https://blogs.ext.vt.edu/ag-pest-advisory>. Seasonal counts are presented in the graphs in Fig. 2. Some fields are not shown because trap monitoring was stopped after 1 or 2 weeks due to harvest or other reasons.



Moth activity reached high levels (averaging more than 13 moths per night) in six of the fields, including one in Virginia Beach (Pungo), one in Accomack County, one in Frederick County, two in Montgomery County, and one in southern Northampton County, where trap catch averaged a whopping 60 moths per night in late July. Corn earworm moth activity was moderate in all other fields in Virginia with trap catch ranging from 0.5 to 12 moths per night.

Fig. 1. *Heliothis* trap for corn earworm earworm.

