

## CORN EARWORM TRAPPING

TRAP DATES  
July 1-Sept. 23

# INSTRUCTIONS

## Corn Earworm

*Helicoverpa zea*

### Trapping Supplies:

- 1 wire mesh Hartstack trap
- 15 Hercon luretape strips (1 per week + extras)

**Timing:** Corn earworm (CEW) moths migrate northward on winds from the Gulf Coast in summer. A small first wave often arrives in late June, while a more damaging flight arrives in August and September. The 30-inch Hartstack trap is used to monitor CEW flights and determine spray intervals for silking sweet corn. Trapping runs 12 weeks, July 1-Sept. 23. Traps may be set in June if tracking early-season flights is useful.

**Trap Placement:** Optimal trap placement is in or directly next to a sweet corn field with fresh green silks. The trap is either mounted on ½-inch pipe or supported with three metal T-posts, as shown in this [Hartstack trap installation](#) video. Traps should be set 4 feet off the ground and baited with a Hercon CEW luretape clipped at the center of the opening to the cone. A new lure is added every week.

**Monitoring:** The weekly trapping period is Thursday to Wednesday. Check the trap once per week (Tuesday or Wednesday morning) and more often if large numbers of moths are appearing. Count, record, and remove any moths in the trap. The moths can be discarded. Refer to the bumble bee bycatch sheet in the unlikely event a bee is found in the trap.

**Reporting:** Set traps on July 1. Change the Hercon corn earworm luretape weekly, each time the trap is checked. Please report weekly moth counts by 11 a.m. each Wednesday using the Insect Trap Networks Survey123 app. Counts are posted online by 4:30 p.m. on Thursdays.



Corn earworm moth



Hartstack trap



Corn earworm larva



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## CORN EARWORM TREATMENT

# DECISION-MAKING

**Control Strategy:** Corn earworm moths lay most of their eggs directly on fresh silks. Once the eggs hatch, the larvae quickly enter the ear tip where they are protected from insecticides. Scouting is usually not feasible; therefore, spray timing is often based on nightly moth counts in Hartstack traps during the vulnerable silking stage.

Insecticides must already be on silks when eggs begin hatching to prevent newly hatched CEW larvae from moving down the silk channel and entering the ear.



Corn earworm moth

### Decision-Making Based on Hartstack Trap Moth Counts

Moths per Night	Recommended Spray Interval
Fewer than 10	Treatment not justified
10 - 99	Reapply 4-5 days until brown silk
100 - 500	Reapply 2-3 days until brown silk or as long as catches remain high
More than 500	Reapply 1-2 days until brown silk or as long as catches remain high

Discontinue treatments 10 days before harvesting fresh market sweet corn as additional sprays will not improve product quality.

**Action Thresholds:** For sweet corn in the silking stage, the standard treatment threshold is 10 or more moths per Hartstack trap for three consecutive nights, as long as green silks are present. Treat vulnerable corn (row tassel to 100% silk) with an effective corn earworm insecticide; reapply every 2-5 days until silks turn brown.

Refer to the UW-Extension publications **Commercial Vegetable Production in Wisconsin (A3422)** and **Pest Management in Wisconsin Field Crops (A3646)** for more information on insecticides and management practices.



Corn earworm larva



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