

# CORN ROOTWORM SURVEY



## Background and Timing

Annual sampling for adult corn rootworm beetles in Wisconsin coincides with peak beetle emergence and the onset of corn silking. Surveys are typically conducted during the first three weeks of August. In each field, beetles are counted on a total of 10 randomly selected plants, separated by at least 20 paces. Results indicate both current beetle pressure and risk level for damage to next year's corn by larval rootworms. DATCP's annual survey helps support rootworm management decision-making.

## Survey Method

- Select grain corn fields in the green silk stage.
- Once a corn field is found, walk at least 50 paces, or 20 rows, into the field to avoid edge effect. Follow a generally circular route while sampling.
- Approach each corn stalk cautiously to avoid disturbing the beetles. Cover the ear tip and silks with your hand while counting to prevent beetles from escaping. Examine each leaf axil, all leaf surfaces, and the tassel. Gently open the ear tip and count the beetles in the silks.
- Record the number of beetles per plant by species (northern, western, and southern) then move to the next plant at least 20 paces away.
- Repeat this process for a total of 10 plants.

## Beetle Counts Per Plant



LOW  
0.1-0.3 beetle  
per plant



Western species



MODERATE  
0.4-0.7 beetle  
per plant



Northern species



HIGH  
> 0.75 beetle  
per plant



Southern species

An average of > 0.75 bpp indicates high risk for root damage to continuous corn



WISCONSIN DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, TRADE AND CONSUMER PROTECTION

PEST SURVEY PROGRAM  
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P-DARM575 (03/26)