

# Agricultural Beet

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Black Cutworm Alert

Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar  
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## Black Cutworm – What to Watch For in Sugar Beets

Cutworm is an occasional insect pest of sugar beets in the SMBSC growing area. Cutworm feeding can involve clipping leaves off or the cutting of the entire plant near the soil surface. There are several types of cutworms that can overwinter in Minnesota, but the black cutworm migrates to Minnesota each season on southerly winds. The University of Minnesota coordinates a black cutworm reporting network. This can be accessed with the following link: <https://swroc.cfans.umn.edu/agricultural-programs/pest-management/black-cutworm-reporting-network>. This cutworm trapping system has indicated an increased risk of cutworm activity this season. Based on these cutworm moth trapping results, black cutworms may be at the stage to begin leaf feeding and cutting on sugar beets in the last week of May or first few days of June.

### Scouting for Cutworm in Sugar Beets

One of the best techniques to scout for cutworm activity in your fields is to set up scouting stations at various locations across the field (Photo 2). Place two flags 10' apart and use popsicle sticks, tooth picks, etc. to mark the emerged beets. Check these stations regularly to watch for leaf feeding or missing beets. If beets are missing, investigate the reason (disease, wind, cutworm activity). Previous crop soybeans and previous crop corn with high residue levels are often preferred fields for cutworm infestations.



Photo credit: [www.sbreb.org](http://www.sbreb.org)



Photo 2: Example of scouting station.

## Thresholds and Recommendations

The economic threshold for treating cutworm depends on the sugar beet population in your field and the amount of feeding/cutworms that are present. Published thresholds mention 4-5% cutting being the threshold for treatment, but this is likely too high in fields with lower than desired stands. Treatment decisions should be made on a field by field basis. For assistance with treatment decisions, contact your Agriculturist.

## Insecticide Options

Product	Rate	Notes
Chlorpyrifos - (Lorsban or generic equivalent)	2 pint/acre	Do not tank-mix with Quadris, Headline, EC formulations of any products, or products containing oil adjuvants. Consult the label for specifics.
Asana XL	5.8-9.6 oz./acre	
Mustang Maxx	2.24-4.0 oz./acre	

Always consult the product label for specifics on application rates and timing.  
All three insecticides listed are Restricted Use Pesticides.

Contact your Agriculturist with any questions.



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