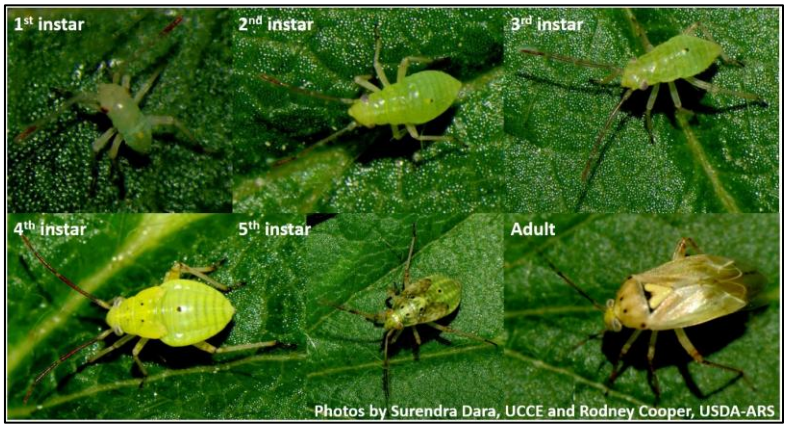
Insect Quicksheet

Lygus Bug

Generally, lygus bugs migrate into sugar beet fields from adjacent alfalfa fields that have been cut or from edible bean fields after dry down. Adults and nymphs damage sugar beet plants by feeding on new leaves with piercing-sucking mouthparts. Females further damage plants by laying eggs into the petioles. Yield is impacted mostly due to late-season development of new leaves in response to feeding injury.



Life stages of Lygus Bug.

Leaf tip yellowing following feeding of Lygus Bug.

Cutworm

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.

White Grub

Pictured to the left is an image of a cutworm next to a white grub. White grubs can also cause damage around the same time as cutworms, however, they cause more chewing damage rather than cutting.

Thresholds and Recommendations

Cutworm	The economic threshold 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.
Lygus Bug	If over one-third of plants are infested with even one lygus bug, chemical control may be justified to prevent economic damage from occurring. However, an insecticide application within 3 weeks of harvest is not likely to be economically beneficial.

Treatment decisions should be made on a field-by-field basis. For assistance with treatment decisions, contact your Agriculturist.

Insecticide Options

Chlorpyrifos with old labeling may not be used for food and feed purposes. The only chlorpyrifos product that can be used in sugar beets is Pilot 4E with the 2025 label. For more information, please visit the MDA website here or contact your local pesticide dealer regarding product availability

There are only a few options to control cutworm and lygus bugs. There are other products that are labeled for use in sugar beet but may not list lygus bug as a target pest. Always consult the product label for specifics on application rates and timing. The table below is simply a guideline.

Product	Rate	Insect Pest	PHI
Pilot 4E	1-2 pints/acre	Lygus Bug and Cutworm	30 Days
Dibrom 8 Emulsive	1 pint/acre	Lygus Bug	2 Days
Asana XL	5.8-9.6 oz./acre	Cutworm (has activity against lygus bug at the high rate but not specifically listed on the label)	21 Days
Mustang Maxx	2.24-4.0 oz./acre	Lygus Bug and Cutworm	50 Days

Always consult the product label for specifics on application rates and timing.

"Applying an insecticide to sugar beets is legal when it is labeled for use in the crop; however, if the specific target pest is not listed for sugar beets, effective control is not implied by the manufacturer, and growers who choose to use the product assume all liability for any unsatisfactory performance." *2025 Sugarbeet Production Guide*

Updated January 20, 2026
David Mettler – Research Agronomist
Mark Bloomquist – Research Director

Agricultural Department
Southern Minnesota Beet Sugar Cooperative