



Survey of Pest Management Practices of Virginia Sweet Corn Growers – 2017

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Virginia commercial sweet corn growers were surveyed to gather baseline information on their current pest management practices. Surveys were disseminated at various vegetable grower meetings held in Virginia from 2016-2017 as well as administered electronically via e-mail link to a Qualtrics survey. A total of 35 growers completed the survey representing 22 different counties in Virginia or North Carolina.



Fig. 1. Corn earworm late instar larva (left and top middle); European corn borer (bottom middle); and fall armyworm (right). CEW Photos by: H. Doughty; FAW photo courtesy of University of Florida.

Survey results

- 43% of growers use transgenic (GMO) sweet corn hybrids containing the *Bt* (*Bacillus thuringiensis*) gene to control lepidopteran larvae, particularly corn earworm, which is the major insect pest attacking sweet corn in Virginia.

- 35% of growers stated that they utilize integrated pest management practices including scouting for pests. Scouting typically involved visually inspecting plants for insects or damage, and not pheromone traps.
- The vast majority of growers sprayed insecticides to protect their sweet corn from insect pests, averaging about 2.5 applications per crop.
- Pyrethroids were the predominant insecticide class used with Asana XL (esfenvalerate), lambda-cyhalothrin (including Warrior II and other generic formulations), Baythroid XL (beta cyfluthrin), permethrin, Tombstone (cyfluthrin), and bifenthrin all being popular choices (Fig. 2).
- The diamide insecticide Coragen, which is a more IPM- and pollinator-friendly insecticide option, was used by 29% of growers.

