



Field Notes for The Week Of 6-6-2022

Dealing with Hungry Slugs

Average, that is the rating I will give the first full week of June. With some decent weather to start the week of May 29th through June 4th, some field work was accomplished but some heavy rain showers towards the middle of the week quickly put a halt to much of the crop planting and hay harvest. This past week I was able to make a few field calls and continued my scouting efforts across the county. I noticed that many producers were able to get some dry hay made at the beginning of the week even though the ground was still quite moist. Some progress was made on soybean planting but there are many more acres still waiting to be planted. According to the USDA crop progress report for May 31st, corn is 86% planted and soybeans stand at 66%, both numbers are below normal planting % for this time of year. Even with delays in planting there is much thought that preventive planting acres will still be low due to higher price values for new crop corn and soybeans. I also want to remind producers to stay vigilant for early season pest that can damage young crops, I have seen many crops that look ragged and worn out from damage caused by slugs, seed corn maggots, and flea beetle. Many of the pest I mention usually slow down this time of year because normally the weather stays consistently warm and drier but forecast models show that the month of June will remain cooler and wetter than normal. If you have your crops planted and they are emerging, take some time to walk the field and make stand counts, this is best done earlier than later. For 30inch rows of corn or beans measure out 17.5 ft of row and count the number of plants that have emerged for example if you have 30 corn plants in 17.5ft your population is 30,000 for drilled or 7.5-inch spacing measure 70 ft and then count.

So, I have received many questions about slugs and why they have become so prevalent the past few years? Here are some quick facts on slugs and how one can manage them.

- Slugs are not picky eaters- Slugs eat on most any plant and plant parts. Foliar damage and germinating seedling damage are both very common.
- They like soybeans- Soybeans seem to be more susceptible to damage especially when germinating, 2-3 days after planting.
- Scout at night- Slugs are nocturnal and do most all their feeding at night. Laying a plastic sheet or a small piece of plywood down in the field and checking during the day is an option to evaluate population levels, they would migrate under the sheet or wood during the heat of the day.
- They call heavy residue home- Adults slugs lay their eggs under crop residue, scouting in early spring can be a good way to get a jump on the problem. Egg hatching in southern Ohio begins in early April and will continue well into May. Eggs are usually in clusters and about half the size of a bb pellet.
- Limited options to control- There are very few options for control, some slug baits have been developed such as Metaldehyde and a product call sluggo which is iron phosphate. Some cultural practices such as tillage, crop rotation, and delayed planting can be good ways to avoid future problems.

