

# Western Bean Cutworm (WBC)

is a relatively new insect pest on Wisconsin field corn. Most common in sandy fields, larvae feed on corn kernels, which can lead to direct yield loss and possible accumulation of mycotoxins. *There is one generation per year.*



white line on leading edge of forewing



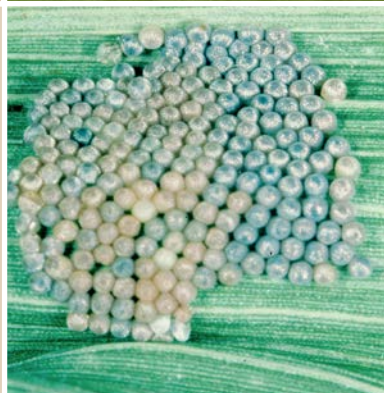
two very short stripes (black rectangles) immediately behind head

## DESCRIPTION

**Adults** are a night flying moth with a 1½ inch wingspan. The primary identifying characteristic is a white line on the leading edge of the forewing.

**Larvae** are dark colored at first hatch. Mature larvae have a tan head and body with two very short stripes (black rectangles) immediately behind the head.

**Eggs** are laid on the upper leaf surface near the tassel, in clusters and are bullet shaped. When first laid, eggs are white and transition to dark purple prior to hatch.



# SCOUTING

- ✓ **Subscribe** to the *Wisconsin Pest Bulletin* for current degree day (DD) accumulations and field reports: <http://datcpservices.wisconsin.gov/pb/subscribe.jsp>
- ✓ **Initiate** egg scouting prior to tassel (~1,350 DD)
- ✓ **Scout** for egg masses on the upper leaf surface; look for the shadow of the egg mass as you walk fields; infestations are usually patchy
- ✓ **Count** egg masses (or small larvae) on 20 consecutive plants in 5 different areas of the field; calculate the % of plants with infestations for each area
- ✓ **Continue** scouting until egg laying has slowed down



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# MANAGEMENT

- **Economic threshold:** 5% of plants with egg masses (or small larvae); accumulate egg mass totals over two scouting periods
- Larvae move quickly to the ear after hatching
- Larvae in the ear are not susceptible to foliar insecticides
- **Transgenic corn:** Only bio-engineered corn with the Vip3A trait controls Western bean cutworm

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**Photo credits:** Western bean cutworm adult and larvae, Adam  
Sisson, Iowa State University; Western bean cutworm egg mass,  
Frank Peairs, Colorado State University; Bugwood.org

This card is available at [ipcm.wisc.edu](http://ipcm.wisc.edu)

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