Assessing Western Bean Cutworm Pressure:
WBC egg masses and larvae are hard to find in dry beans, thus scouting for larvae is not recommended. Use pheromone traps to monitor adult flight. As few as 150 total moths indicates a large local population. Scout nearby pre-tassel and pollinating corn fields for egg masses. Scouting corn is easy and can indicate pest pressure in the local area. Seven to ten days after egg masses are found in corn, scout dry beans for feeding injury = flowers with pinholes, small pods cut off at pedicel and larger pods with chewed spots or holes (see page two). Damage is difficult to see without careful and patient examination.

Western Bean Cutworm Control Recommendations:
• For Michigan, an insecticide application may be necessary if:
  ▶ average pheromone trap catch > 150
  ▶ nearby pre-tassel corn fields have egg masses
  ▶ pod damage is present
• Spray with a long-lasting pyrethroid 7 to 14 days after peak flight. It is preferable to be on the later side of this interval than to spray before peak flight.
• One well-timed spray is just as effective as multiple sprays.
• Be aware of pre-harvest intervals, which may be as long as 21 days.

Dry bean acres throughout Michigan, with the exception of the Thumb and Saginaw Valley, were treated in 2009 to 2011 for WBC injury. This difference in population level could be related to soil type and better overwintering success of WBC in the central part of the state. However, there is the possibility for localized populations in the Thumb and Saginaw Valley, especially in areas with sandy soils.
Western Bean Cutworm Lifecycle:
- One generation per year
- Adult moths emerge in late spring to early summer from the soil
- Moths lay eggs in mid-July through early August (in the early morning)
- Larvae feed first on leaf tissue and blossoms, then on developing pods and beans
- Damage to dry beans results in reduced yield and quality of the crop
- Sixth instar larvae burrow into the soil from late August to early September