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Using
Pheromone-
Baited Traps to
Monitor Corn
Earworm in
Sweet Corn

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2025
Cornell Integrated Crop and
Pest Management Guidelines for
Commercial Vegetable Production

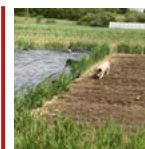
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Using Pheromone-Baited Traps to Monitor Corn Earworm in Sweet Corn

John Mahas and Brian Nault, Cornell Entomology

As the sweet corn growing season approaches, it is time to consider the best strategies for monitoring corn earworm moths to guide timely and effective pest management decisions. The corn earworm (Image 1A) remains one of the most damaging pests of sweet corn in New York State. During the fresh green silking stage, corn plants release chemicals that attract female moths and stimulate them to lay eggs on the silks. Upon hatching, larvae feed briefly on silks and quickly move into the ear to consume the corn kernels. Feeding damage makes fresh market ears unmarketable, while damage confined to the tip of the ear is acceptable for processing sweet corn.

One option for managing corn earworm in fresh market varieties is GMO sweet corn that expresses *Bacillus thuringiensis* (Bt) proteins, which are toxic only to caterpillars. However, widespread use of Bt traits has led to resistance development. The only Bt varieties with strong protection against corn earworm are those with the Vip3A trait (example: Attribute II series). Sweet corn varieties without the Vip3A trait must be protected from corn earworm using foliar insecticide applications. Most Bt sweet corn varieties do not have the Vip3A trait.

Resistance to various insecticide active ingredients complicates decision making. To combat insecticide resistance, growers can adopt strategies such as rotating insecticide modes of action and reducing spray frequency using action thresholds. Action thresh-



Image 1. (A) Corn earworm moth on sweet corn silks, (B) modified Hartstack trap, (C) Scentry Heliiothis trap, and (D) green bucket trap. Photos: J. Obermeyer and B. Nault

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About VegEdge

VegEdge newsletter is exclusively for enrollees in the Cornell Vegetable Program, a Cornell Cooperative Extension partnership between Cornell University and CCE Associations in 14 counties.



The newsletter is a service to our enrollees and is intended for educational purposes, strengthening the relationship between our enrollees, the Cornell Vegetable Program team, and Cornell University.

We're interested in your comments. Contact us at:
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Information provided is general and educational in nature. Employees and staff of the Cornell Vegetable Program, Cornell Cooperative Extension, and Cornell University do not endorse or recommend any specific product or service.

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CCE and its employees assume no liability for the effectiveness or results of any chemicals for pesticide usage. No endorsement of products or companies is made or implied. READ THE LABEL BEFORE APPLYING ANY PESTICIDE.

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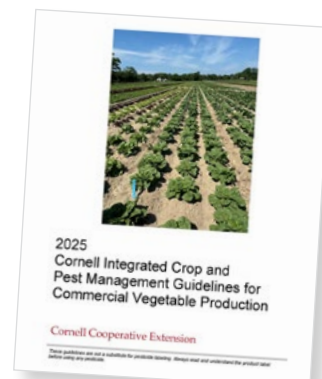
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The next issue of VegEdge will be produced on May 14, 2025.

2025 Cornell Commercial Vegetable Production Guidelines Now Available!

Just released, the [2025 Integrated Crop and Pest Management Guidelines for Commercial Vegetable Production](#) provides up-to-date vegetable crop production information for New York State. Included are cultural and pest management strategies for the major vegetable crops grown in New York State. It has been designed as a practical guide for vegetable crop producers, crop consultants, ag chemical dealers, and others who advise vegetable crop producers.



Cornell Vegetable Guidelines are available as a PRINT copy (\$49.50 + shipping & handling) or ONLINE access (\$49.50). You can purchase a copy directly through The Cornell Store at <https://www.cornellstore.com/books/cornell-cooperative-ext-pmep-guidelines> or call The Cornell Store Customer Care team at (800) 624-4080 to place an order (and pay by credit card).

Alternatively, some [Cornell Cooperative Extension offices](#) in our region offer growers assistance in placing an order for Cornell Guidelines. Call ahead to make sure your local office offers that service. ●

2025 Cornell Berry Guidelines Available!

The [2025 Cornell Pest Management Guidelines for Berry Crops](#) offers producers, horticultural and chemical dealers, and crop consultants practical information on growing and managing berry crops in New York State. In addition to providing updated pesticide options for 2025, topics include general culture, nutrient management, harvesting and handling guidelines, spray application technology information, and ways to manage common berry crop pest concerns.

Cornell Berry Guidelines are available as a PRINT copy (\$39.00 + shipping & handling) or ONLINE access (\$39.00). You can purchase a copy directly through The Cornell Store at <https://www.cornellstore.com/books/cornell-cooperative-ext-pmep-guidelines> or call The Cornell Store Customer Care team at (800) 624-4080 to place an order (and pay by credit card). ●

olds are predefined levels of pest numbers or damage at which control measures, such as insecticide applications, should be implemented to prevent economic losses.

Monitoring corn earworm moth activity is essential for employing action thresholds. The number of moths captured in traps informs growers if and when insecticides should be sprayed. Pheromone-baited traps, such as the Hartstack (original or modified, Image 1B) and Scentry Heliiothis (Image 1C), are widely used to monitor corn earworm moth activity. The green bucket trap (Image 1D) is commonly used to monitor other moth pests like fall armyworm and western bean cutworm. Because the effectiveness of different trap designs and pheromone lure types for monitoring corn earworm can vary, we conducted a study to determine the best choices for catching corn earworm moths.

Evaluating Trap Designs and Pheromone Lures

A multi-state field trial was conducted in 2022 and 2023 in New York, Maryland, Delaware and North Carolina to assess corn earworm moth captures using different trap designs and pheromone lures. The trial included a modified Hartstack trap, Scentry Heliiothis trap, and a green bucket trap (Images 1B-D). The commercially available corn earworm-specific pheromone lures were Hercon luretape, Scentry, Trécé, and Alpha Scents.

Trap Selection

Results revealed that the modified Hartstack captured similar numbers of moths as the Heliiothis trap, and both captured significantly more moths than the green bucket trap (Chart 1). **These results confirm that the green bucket trap is not a suitable option for monitoring corn earworm activity.**

The modified Hartstack trap is highly effective for capturing corn earworm moths and is relatively durable. But this trap is heavy, wire-fabricated with sharp edges, more expensive, difficult to handle, and not commercially available. In contrast, **the Scentry Heliiothis trap is light weight, mesh-fabricated, reasonably priced, easy to handle and commercially available.** Though the green bucket trap is the least expensive option, it struggles to catch corn earworm moths, and is not recommended.

Lure Selection

The Hercon lure outperformed the Trécé and Alpha Scents lures, and performed statistically similar to Scentry (Chart 2). The Hercon luretape numerically attracted the most corn earworm moths. Using the Hercon luretape ensures compatibility with current action thresholds and is a good choice for monitoring corn earworm moths.

Action Thresholds and Monitoring

Current action thresholds are designed for and provide good management results when you use a Hercon lure with either a modified Hartstack or Scentry Heliiothis trap (Chart 3). This is good news because action thresholds for other trap-lure combinations do not exist.

Takeaway and Next Steps

Monitoring corn earworm moth activity is important for making informed pest management decisions and reducing unnecessary insecticide applications, which can save growers time and money. Growers are encouraged to trap for corn earworm moths, especially during the green silking stage when female moths lay eggs on the silks and pest activity impacts spray timing decisions. By referencing the [Sweet Corn Pheromone Trap Network Report](#), growers can access detailed trapping methods and view up-to-date moth capture data specific to their region. For more information and resources, contact a Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Vegetable Specialist for personalized guidance.

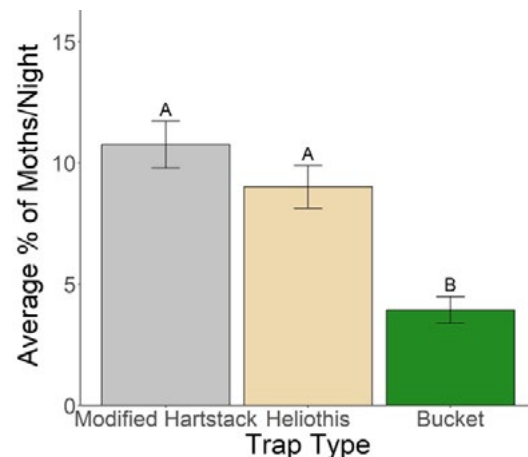


Chart 1. Average ($\pm$ standard errors) percentage of moths captured per night for each trap type. Bars that share the same letter are not statically different. The larger the bar, the more moths captured. The modified Hartstack trap captured a similar number of moths as the Heliiothis trap.

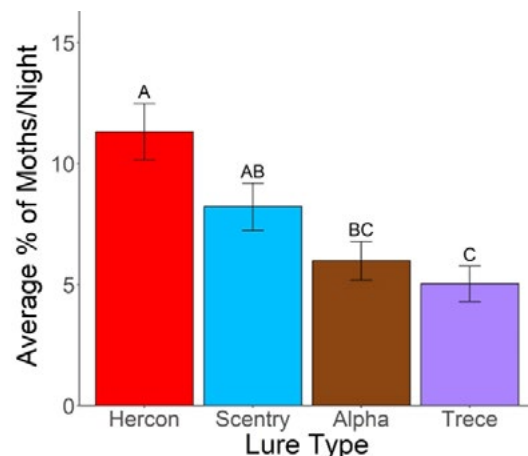


Chart 2. Average ($\pm$ standard errors) percentage of moths captured per night for each lure type. Bars that share the same letter are not statically different. The larger the bar, the more moths captured. The Hercon lure attracted a similar number of moths as the Scentry lure.

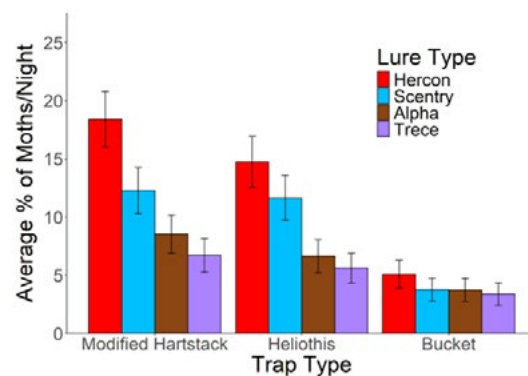


Chart 3. Average ($\pm$ standard errors) percentage of moths captured per night for each trap by lure type combination. The larger the bar, the more moths captured. The Hercon lure paired with the Hartstack or Heliiothis trap captured a similar number of moths and captured more moths than the other trap by lure combinations. ●

Non-Neonicotinoid Insecticides Show Promise for Managing Colorado Potato Beetle in New York

Marcelo Dimase and Brian Nault, Cornell Entomology, Cornell Agri-Tech

Neonicotinoid insecticides are under increasing regulatory scrutiny, with restrictions or bans aimed at protecting pollinators, non-target organisms, and groundwater. In 2023, New York State enacted the Birds and Bees Protection Act, which bans the use of neonicotinoid seed treatments for major crops, including corn, soybean, and wheat starting in 2029. While these restrictions do not currently apply to potato cultivation, they signal a broader shift in agricultural policy. As a result, potato growers are increasingly asking: What are my options for managing Colorado potato beetle (CPB) without neonicotinoids like Assail, Cruiser, and Platinum? Proactively evaluating alternative insecticides now will help growers stay ahead of regulatory changes and support more sustainable pest management practices.

In 2024, we tested six non-neonicotinoid insecticides (plus one neonicotinoid for comparison) against CPB populations collected from ten locations across New York (Figure 1). Our goal was to evaluate which alternatives work and where they might fall short.

What We Did

We dipped potato leaves in solutions of each insecticide at their highest labeled foliar rates (Table 1) for 20 seconds, then exposed either small larvae or adult CPB to the treated leaves. After three days (or six to seven days for Vantacor due to its slower mode of action), we recorded mortality. We also evaluated defoliation with Vantacor to understand its feeding suppression ability.

What We Found

Some products performed very well, while others showed variable control depending on population and life stage (Table 2). In summary:

- Agri-Mek SC** (Group 6, avermectin), **Exirel** (Group 28, diamide), and **Assail 30SG** (Group 4A, neonicotinoid) provided 100% control of both small larvae and adults across all locations tested.
- Delegate WG** and **Entrust SC** (Group 5, spinosyns) were effective in most locations, but a population from Ulster County showed significant reduced mortality, especially for adults, suggesting resistance. In addition, a population from Columbia County showed slightly reduced mortality when exposed to Delegate WG and Entrust SC.
- Warrior II** (Group 3A, pyrethroid) had inconsistent results, with mortality ranging from 5% to 100% depending on population, suggesting resistance in some locations.
- Vantacor** (Group 28, diamide) was highly effective against small larvae. Even when adult mortality was lower in some locations, it still limited feeding damage, reducing defoliation to <10% in all but one population. This insecticide is known to act more slowly than others, so growers may not observe significant adult mortality for several days. However, its mode of action inhibits feeding shortly after exposure, meaning defoliation is likely to be reduced even if visible mortality is delayed.

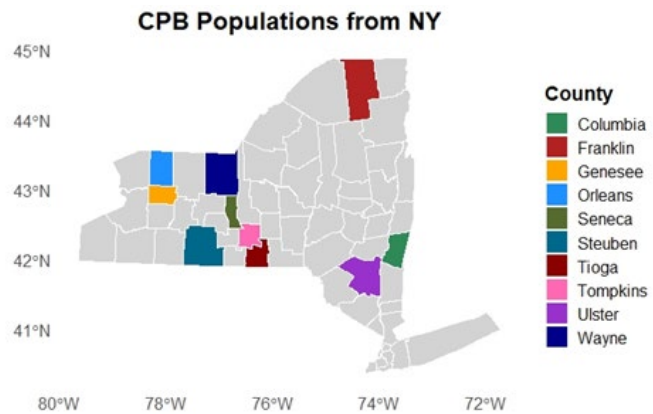


Figure 1. Locations where CPB populations were collected from in New York State in 2024.

Table 1. Insecticide treatments used in the highest labeled rate bioassays.

Trade name	Active ingredient	IRAC class	Class name	Highest foliar rate
Agri-Mek SC	abamectin	6	Avermectin	3.5 fl oz/acre
Assail 30SG	acetamiprid	4A	Neonicotinoid	4 oz/acre
Delegate WG	spinetoram	5	Spinosyn	4 oz/acre
Entrust SC	spinosad	5	Spinosyn	10 fl oz/acre
Exirel	cyantraniliprole	28	Diamide	13.5 fl oz/acre
Vantacor	chlorantraniliprole	28	Diamide	2.5 fl oz/acre
Warrior II w/zeon technology	lambda-cyhalothrin	3A	Pyrethroid	1.92 fl oz/acre

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What This Means for Growers

These results highlight the importance of rotating insecticide groups and avoiding over-reliance on any single product. For example, reduced efficacy of Delegate and Entrust in the same population suggests that Group 5 products were likely used too frequently in those areas. Even within the same county, susceptibility may vary between populations, emphasizing the need for farm-specific resistance management. **If you are seeing inconsistent CPB control, it may be time to reassess your insecticide rotation strategy.** Going forward, we will continue to monitor CPB susceptibility across New York. This work helps to inform practical, region-specific insecticide resistance management plans. Our CPB monitoring program for susceptibility to different insecticides will continue in 2025.

Acknowledgments

We thank the participating growers and Cornell Cooperative Extension Specialists Chuck Bornt and Margie Lund for their support in conducting this study.

Disclaimer: Changes in pesticide registrations occur constantly and human errors are possible. Read the label before applying any pesticide. The label is the law. No endorsement of companies is made or implied. ●

Table 2. Average mortality (%) and defoliation (%) from CPB populations exposed to selected insecticides at the highest labeled foliar rates in New York in 2024. For each insecticide, results for small larvae (SL) are presented first then results for adults (AD) after the /.

Population	Delegate (SL/AD)	Entrust (SL/AD)	Warrior II (SL/AD)	Vantacor (SL/AD)	Vantacor % Defoliation
Columbia1	100 / 84	95 / 100	95 / 74	93 / 8	10.5
Franklin1	100 / 100	100 / 100	100 / 100	85 / 10	2.0
Genesee1	100 / 100	100 / 100	65 / 35	100 / 100	0.5
Genesee2	100 / 100	100 / 100	68 / 70	88 / 10	4.5
Steuben3	100 / 100	100 / 100	85 / 5	100 / 75	0.5
Ulster1	78 / 20	62 / 20	95 / 100	92 / 20	8.8
Wayne1	100 / 100	100 / 100	44 / 15	89 / 5	7.8
Wayne2	100 / 100	100 / 100	89 / 100	100 / 100	0.5

Records Required by the FSMA Produce Safety Rule

Robert Hadad, Cornell Cooperative Extension, Cornell Vegetable Program

The [April 2, 2025 issue of VegEdge](#) (Vol. 21, Iss. 4, pg 6) had an article about the updated pre-harvest water requirements. There are still monthly [videos covering the presentation on the revised Module 5.1](#): https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_4NIqVzTctIGvule

It is also available in Spanish. [Video presentation in Spanish](#): https://cornell.ca1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_1YQ8zNoO7x6mTpY

Also available are the required updated records templates both in English and Spanish.

Records Required by the FSMA Produce Safety Rule

The FSMA Produce Safety Rule (PSR) requires a few specific records. This publication summarizes the provisions requiring records and includes template records to help establish records to meet FSMA PSR requirements. Growers may want or need to keep additional records to ensure that required practices are being carried out correctly, to meet buyer requirements, and/or participate in a third-party audit. Other documentation, such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), may be helpful to support the implementation of practices on the farm.

- [Records Required by the FSMA Produce Safety Rule](#) (Version 3.1 updated 2/25/2025 to include revisions to agricultural water-related records requirements): <https://resources.producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/documents/Records-Required-by-the-FSMA-PSR.pdf>
- [Template Records in Word format](#) (Version 3.1 updated 2/25/2025): <https://resources.producesafetyalliance.cornell.edu/documents/Templates.docx>
- Spanish version of the [Records required](#) and [templates](#): <https://cornell.app.box.com/s/mmktkumlr60ecqk9nukpme1ksiff-neu> and <https://cornell.app.box.com/s/fj6ui0imvmwwy1hn2g7szuqx2n53kjgq>.

For more information on this or other farm food safety topics, contact Robert Hadad, rg26@cornell.edu, 585-739-4065. ●

Tarps Provide Promise for Weed Control, Water Management, and Overwinter Nutrient Retention

Crystal Stewart-Courtens, CCE Eastern NY Commercial Horticulture Program

An increasing number of smaller scale vegetable growers are seeing the benefits of incorporating tarps into their systems. In the spring, tarps can moderate moisture by retaining it during dry periods and shedding it during rainy ones. As the soil warms, the tarp can stimulate a flush of weeds to germinate and then die on prepared beds, leaving remarkably clean ground to seed or plant into. In the fall a tarp can be applied to prepared beds and, based on our preliminary studies, can provide early access to ground which has retained up to 50% more nitrogen than ground overwintered in cover crops.

There are clear limitations to the use of tarps based on scale, so applications may be niche on larger farms. Most farms settle on tarps that are between 100 and 150 feet long and between 25 and 32 feet wide. This size range is relatively easy to fold and unfold with two people, and can be palletized, allowing for easy transport from location to location on the farm. Because tarps are impermeable it is important to think about how water will move on them (or not). Low points in the field will fill with water, causing logistical issues, and sloped fields will see large volumes of water drain from the tarp, causing potential erosion or ponding issues. Finally, when using tarps for weed control it is essential to place them when the ground is moist. Placing a tarp on dry ground will fail to germinate weed seeds.

If any of these applications are sounding enticing, the next consideration is probably cost. Here is a breakdown of the startup costs to get a 32-by-100 foot tarp set up in the field (total average cost is \$350):

- Tarp: In general prices for tarps will be lowest through local dealers, and may range from \$270 to \$345.
- Sandbags: Small (10" by 14") sandbags are very easy to use, but you may prefer larger bags, which will cost marginally more. 100 small sandbags with built in ties are \$33 through Uline. It will take around 45 small sandbags to secure this tarp in a windy location.
- Incidentals include a pallet to store/move your tarp and sandbags and sand.

Wear and tear on the tarp varies dramatically, but tarps may last for up to 20 years under light usage. Sandbags are generally not UV stabilized and will break down after a few years, especially if they are stored outside year-round.

Naturally, the per use cost of a tarp decreases the most often it's used. It is increasingly common for growers planting successions of carrots and beets to "flip" the tarp from one section to the next, allowing a 3-4 week tarp application before each seeding. Keeping tarps in use through the whole season becomes common as growers get more comfortable with their applications.

Download a complete research report on tarp usage in reduced till vegetable systems is available, [Tarping Trial at Philia Farm](#). This work was funded by the Specialty Crop Research Initiative. ●



Clean ground ready for spring planting of cabbage transplants in research trials. Photo: C. Stewart-Courtens



Cornell Cooperative Extension

Developing Enterprise Budgets for Onion and Cabbage Production in NYS

Do you grow cabbage or onions? Please contribute to a short survey to develop updated enterprise budgets for New York State.

Cornell vegetable educators and faculty are working on a project to develop enterprise budgets for onion and cabbage production in New York State. University enterprise budgets can help the industry as they are used to set crop insurance rates and payments, contribute to improved economic studies of technology or management changes, and can be used by industry to show the impact of policies on farms in NYS.

No personal or financial information will be collected, and we will not publish any information that would identify an individual farm.

If you haven't already responded to a direct request to provide information to the survey, please respond here: <https://bit.ly/4ch1jEB>.

Upcoming Events

Unlocking Opportunities in Farm to School

May 5, 2025 (Monday) - *For Value-Added Producers, Distributors, and Manufacturers*

May 7, 2025 (Wednesday) - *For Growers, Producers, and Farmers*

Join CCE Harvest NY for two targeted online trainings designed to help producers, distributors, manufacturers, and growers tap into the school food market and expand their reach. Whether you're just starting or already selling to schools, the Harvest NY team will guide you through the necessary steps to grow your presence in the school food market. Each training will be tailored to the specific needs of the audience, but anyone is welcome to attend either session based on interests and business goals!

Harvest NY Farm to School Procurements Specialists will walk participants through aspects of the Farm to School market. This online training will:

- Introduce you to the Harvest NY team and the resources we provide.
- Provide you with a high-level overview of the Child Nutrition market, which is regulated at the federal, state, and municipal level. Understanding the nuances of this market is critical to understanding how to build a successful business relationship with them.
- Review the 30% NY Food Product Initiative, including the paperwork and requirements and how Harvest NY supports this process for you.
- Learn what School Food Authorities (SFAs-the school food buyers) need and how to your products work in a school setting.
- Discover ways to expand your reach within school food programs and grow your presence.

[Register](https://cornell.zoom.us/join/9JkQZqV22qV6CRaqA#/registration) at <https://cornell.zoom.us/join/9JkQZqV22qV6CRaqA#/registration>

For more information: Cheryl Bilinski - cbt32@cornell.edu, (607) 592-9507. ●

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VegEdge is the highly regarded newsletter produced by the Cornell Vegetable Program. It provides readers with information on upcoming meetings, pesticide updates, pest management strategies, cultural practices, marketing ideas, and research results from Cornell University and Cornell Cooperative Extension. VegEdge is produced every few weeks, with frequency increasing leading up to and during the growing season.

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Cornell Vegetable Program**

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