



The Agriculture Program

The Texas A&M University System



Corn in Texas

Crop Brief on Production, Pests, & Pesticides

Corn Production

- Texas harvests nearly 2 million acres annually.
- The cash value to farmers is \$514 million, which generates \$1.7 billion for Texas.
- Both food- and feed-grade corn are produced, due to favorable environmental factors.

Insect Pests

- Bt corn has been rapidly adopted in the High Plains where stalk borers are a problem.
- Integrated pest management, including crop rotation and planting resistant hybrids are commonly practiced.
- 66% of acreage is scouted and insecticides are applied based on economic thresholds. Soil insects are major pests in southern areas. Foliar insects and stalk borers are more common in the High Plains.
- Major insects include spider mites, European and southwestern corn borers, western corn rootworm, Mexican rootworm, corn earworm, and fall armyworm.
- **Bifenthrin (Capture)** is used to control borers and mites. **Permethrin (Pounce, Ambush)** and **esfenvalerate (Asana)** are also used.
- **Carbofuran (Furadan – a carbamate)**, **chlorpyrifos (Lorsban –an OP)**, **dimethoate (Cygon – an OP)**, and **terbufos (Counter – an OP)** are commonly used but are targeted for review under FQPA.

Diseases

- Corn hybrids are bred for genetic resistance to most diseases.
- Crop rotations and planting disease-resistant hybrids reduced disease impacts.
- Seed is treated but no fungicides are applied in the field.

Weeds

- Weed control is the primary concern of corn producers. 83% of all pesticide use in corn is aimed at controlling weeds.
- 82% of the producers rotate fields. Mechanical cultivation, adjusted planting and harvesting dates, and herbicide use are common weed control practices.
- Pigweed, annual grasses, several perennial broadleaf weeds and johnsongrass are major problems.
- **Atrazine** is the primary herbicide and is used on 70% of the corn acreage. **Atrazine** is a mainstay herbicide but its use is under review by the EPA. Other herbicides commonly used include **metolachlor (Dual)**, **dicamba (Banvel)**, **nicosulfuron (Accent)**, and **dimethenamid (Frontier)**.

Outlook

- Public and private breeding programs strive to improve insect and disease resistance.
- Independent crop advisors check most corn fields. Chemicals are costly, so use is based on scouting, pest presence, and expected markets.
- For latest information regarding these issues and status of risk assessments visit ipmwww.ncsu.edu/opmppiap and www.epa.gov/pesticides.

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