

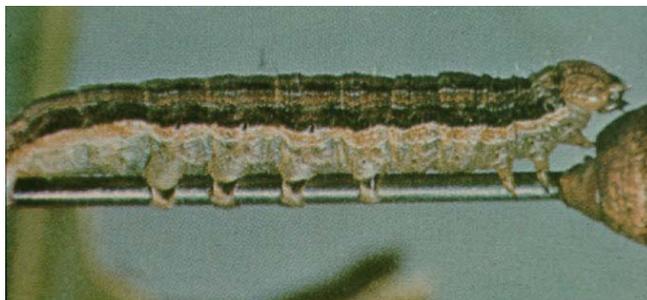
# Investigation for the Insect Attack

## Armyworm (*Pseudaletia unipuncta*)

**PLANTS ATTACKED:** All forage crops.



**Figure 1.** Armyworm adult



**Figure 2.** Armyworm larva

**DESCRIPTION:** Adult (See Figure 1). Pale-brown or brownish-gray with a wing expanse of about 5.5 inches. There is a small but prominent white dot near the center of each forewing.

Larva (See Figure 2). The young worms are pale green and have looping habits; older worms do not loop while crawling. The mature larva is about 1.2 inches long, greenish brown and has three stripes on each side of the body. The upper stripe is pale orange, the middle part is lark brown, and the bottom stripe is pale yellow. The worm has a smooth skin, honeycombed head, three pairs of true legs and five pairs of prolegs.

**LIFE HISTORY:** These insects usually pass through winter as larvae in soil around clumps of grasses. After a short period of feeding in the early spring, they pupate in the soil and moths emerge from the cocoon about 2 weeks later. The moths remain hidden during the day but are active at night and are attracted to lights. The females lay greenish-white eggs (See Figure 3) in rows or clusters on the lower leaves of the host plants but they are frequently deposited on clothes hung to dry. Each time composed about 50 eggs. Each cluster of eggs is protected by white adhesive fluid. Eggs hatch in 3 to 14 days, depending upon the prevailing temperatures. The larval period extends usually from 20 to 30 days. There are 3 to 5 generations per year.



**Figure 3.** Armyworm egg mass



**Figure 4.** Armyworm pupa

**DAMAGE:** The newly hatched larva begins feeding immediately upon foliage, eating the epidermis at first and causing a skeletonized appearance. Older larvae straddle the outer margins of the leaves, especially grass blades, and cut holes reaching to midrib. They often cut the heads of small grain plants off. Although the insects prefer grass crops, they also feed on legumes. After devouring the food supply in an area where they hatched, the larvae move in armies to the nearby fields. Usually, most damage to field crops is caused during spring by first generation larvae.



**Figure 5.** Armyworm larva on leaf

**SYMPTOMS:** Small patches of brown turf with grass blades were eaten off in circular patches. Tiny fuzz-covered eggs were observed on the grass. More than five larvae per square yard indicate infection.

**INSTANT TREATMENT:** Spray *Bacillus thuringiensis*, carbaryl, chlorpyrifos, diazinon, neem, or pyrethrum. Use diazinon or chlorpyrifos lawn granules can also help.