

SmartStax™ On Target To Combat Corn Rootworm In 2010

Illinois Test Plots Reveal Exceptional Root Protection

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Dr. Michael E. Gray, Professor and Interim Assistant Dean, ANR Extension, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign, gave an abbreviated timeline of significant western corn rootworm events in a recent presentation at Dixon Springs.

According to Gray, the western corn rootworms have been inhabitants of corn in Central America for roughly 5,000 years and have been in the western-half of the Great Plains of the US since 1867.

“The eastward expansion of this species occurred across Nebraska, Iowa, and included the initial movement into Illinois in 1964. The western corn rootworm has developed resistance to a number of insecticide classes including the chlorinated hydrocarbons (1950s and 1960s) and more recently to organophosphate compounds (1990s). The western corn rootworm is very adaptable to management tactics, including crop rotation. In 1995, producers across east central Illinois witnessed widespread severe root injury in rotated fields. In roughly 30 years since western corn rootworms invaded Illinois, they were able to adapt to this cultural management tactic,” explained Gray.

In 2003, Bt corn hybrids for corn rootworm entered the market place. In 2008, Gray and his colleagues conducted experiments with the SmartStax™ technology in plots established at the University of Illinois near the Urbana campus.

“The trials were sponsored by the Monsanto Company. The level of root protection afforded by the SmartStax™ treatment was exceptional in early and late August despite significant pressure (over two nodes of roots destroyed) in the

control treatment,” stated Gray.

SmartStax™ is on track to become commercially available in the U.S. for the 2010 growing season via a cross licensing agreement between Monsanto Company and Dow AgroSciences LLC, targeting against lepidopterans and corn rootworms. In addition, these hybrids will provide herbicide tolerance to two herbicides: glyphosate and glufosinate.



Dr. Michael E. Gray, Professor and Interim Assistant Dean, ANR Extension, University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

Photo by John LaRose, Jr.

In late January Monsanto and Dow AgroSciences announced Mexico, a major importer of U.S. corn grain and dried distillers grains, has given full regulatory authorization for importation of grain with three corn traits: Genuity™ SmartStax™, Genuity™ VT Triple PRO™, and Genuity™ VT Double PRO™.

Dow AgroSciences LLC will offer SmartStax™, a combination of HERCULEX® Insect Protection and YieldGard™ through its seed affiliates, Mycogen Seeds, Dairyland Seed Co., Renze Seeds, Brodbeck Seed and Triumph Seed. Δ

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