



## **Time to get some pollen down your back!**

There are many good reasons to be out in your corn fields during tasseling. First is to scout for Western Bean Cutworm (WBC). For a re-fresher on WBC please refer to [Western Bean Cutworm Scouting and Management in Field Corn](#).

Trap counts in the Annapolis Valley, and PEI have been quite high for the past ten days. This indicates peak moth flight. To judge whether you should be spraying your field, you should be in the fields looking for egg masses on the upper portion of the plant. To avoid yield loss, spray when there is an accumulation (from successive counts) of 5% of the plants with egg masses or small larvae over a two to three week period.

Industry has done a very good job of putting up monitoring traps to identify peak flight, and they should be commended for coming together. It is a lot of commitment on their part to check these traps at least once a week and report their results. I would like to acknowledge Colin Brown from Pioneer, the crew at Cavendish Agri in Kentville, Amanda Eisses at Pioneer, Terry MacKay and Vanessa Deveau from NSDAM, and the whole crew at Truro Agromart.

The next reason to be out there is to look at the amount of light hitting the floor under the corn canopy. At mid-day during tasseling you are at peak light interception for the corn crop. We often get the question whether growers should be increasing their plant populations. Too much light hitting the ground is one indication that your plant population could be pushed higher. If there is a lot of light hitting the ground, this is light that is not harvested by the corn crop to convert into yield (wasted light).

If more than 10% of the ground area is lit up, then you could stand to increase your plant population slightly. If you see no light hitting the ground you may have over shot your ideal population. The distribution of the light is also important to note. If it is large blotches, then you should take some time to take a look at your stand as it may be very irregular. This could be a result of a problem with your planter or pests may have thinned your stand. You need to take the time to assess where the problem is coming from.



Above: Too much light hitting the ground under a corn canopy may be an indication that plant population could have been pushed higher to obtain maximum yield.



Above: Large blotches of light under a corn canopy may be an indication of an unacceptable plant stand.

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