Cornell Cooperative Extension
South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Program
Broome | Cayuga | Chemung | Cortland | Tioga | Tompkins
DAIRY & FIELD CROPS DIGEST
Sept/Oct 2026

The Silage Sweet Spot: Harvest Decisions That Matter

By: Janice Degni, Area Extension Field Crop Specialist

The 2026 spring planting window was extended, leading to a wide range of relative maturities. My observation of the beginning of tasseling was the week of July 19. Sixty days is the length of time, on average, that it takes for corn silage to mature from silking (pollination) to black layer (physiological maturity). We use ½ milk line as the indicator to start checking whole plant moisture. It is only and indicator since dry or wet weather can influence whole plant moisture in the crop. At 1/2 milkline, we expect DM to fall between 30-35%. Seventy percent moisture is the long-term accepted target for beginning harvest for bunks, but consideration needs to be given to your farm storage. Nutritionists are encouraging targeting higher dry matters to increase starch levels. It's a balancing act to strike the DM where you can pack well and preserve maximum nutrients. Bunk silos pack better at the top of the range, while uprights may have excessive seepage above 68% moisture (See Table 1).

Table 1. Target Crop DM Levels for Vertical Silage Systems

Oxygen limiting structure	
Corn silage	40-65% DM [35-60% moisture]
Conventional Concrete & Stave Structure	
Corn Silage :	
Under 60 feet	32-36% DM [64-68% moisture]
Over 60 feet	Increase 2% DM per 10 ft vertical height

Source: Mike Hutjens, U of Illinois, Urbana. http://qualitysilage.com/wp-content/themes/twentyten/PDF/TowerSiloManagement.pdf

We use a portable NIR machine to to test the dry matter and starch level of the sample you bring to the clinic. Please follow these guidelines:

1.Corn must be dented and at or near the 1/2 milk-line stage, otherwise the samples will be too wet or unreadable.

2. Collect 4-6 random stalks from the field, beyond the headlands

3. Label each field with hybrid, maturity group & planting date so that we can compare the data.

Whole plant dry matter samples will run 2-3 points above actual field conditions (that is the corn will be wetter). Knowing the maturity of your crop and how many days or weeks it takes to harvest allows you to target the moisture for when to start harvest. (See Table 2)
Moisture is estimated to decrease by .5-1 point/day, which is weather dependent.

The following guidelines can improve corn silage related to maturity: *by Michael F. Hutjens, Professor Emeritus, University of Illinois—Urbana-Champaign*

⇒ Watch milk line to gauge harvest

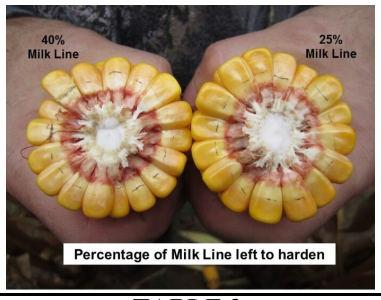
⇒ Silage dry matter should range from 30 to 36 percent (depending on the storage unit).

⇒ Kernels should be soft and broken at ensiling time.

⇒ Silage pH should range from 3.8 to 4.2 after ensiling.

Approximate GDD Accumulation for Stages of Corn Development

Growth Stage	80 day hybrid	110 day hybrid
Emergence	110	110
Silk Stage	1,100	1,400
½ Milk Line	1,800	2,400
Maturity (black layer)	1,900	2,500



Source: Agweb.com

TABLE 2.
Influence of Corn Maturity on Grain Yield, Whole Plant Silage Yield and Moisture Content

			% Max Yield		% Moisture	
Maturity Stage	**Avg cal Days To Maturity**	**GDU to Maturity**	**Grain**	**Whole Plant**	**Grain**	**Whole Plant**
Silk	50-55	1100-1200	0	50-55	---	80-85
Blister	40-45	875-975	0-10	55-60	85-95	80-85
Late Milk	30-35	650-750	30-50	65-75	60-80	75-80
Early Dent	20-25	425-525	60-75	75-85	50-55	70-75
Full Dent (1/2 Milk-line)	10-15	200-300	90-95	100	35-40	65-70
Blacklayer	0	0	100	95-100	25-35	55-65

Assumes 20 GDU/day to maturity. Adapted from Carter, PR, 1993. Pioneer Hi-Bred

Continued on page 2.

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We put knowledge to work in pursuit of economic vitality, ecological sustainability, and social well-being. We bring local experience and research-based solutions together, helping our families and our community thrive in a rapidly changing world.

("Staging Corn Maturity" - Continued form page 1)

If you have late planted corn, you may be wondering if it will be harvestable before the killing frost. The table below can provide some guidance. The Climate Smart Farming Site at https://climatesmartfarming.org/ has a Growing Degree Day Calculator that can help determine a target harvest date based on the hybrid maturity group and patterns of GDD accumulation at the end of the season.

Fall -First Frost Dates (2010-2025)

Site	Earliest	Average	Latest	Season Length in Days		
				Min	Mean	Max
Auburn	10/10	10/22	11/08	147	169	192
Freeville	9/17	10/09	11/01	112	150	167
Elmira/ Corning	9/18	10/12	11/03	119	154	174
Whitney Point	9/19	10/18	11/03	126	163	178

Source: Climod 2 Weather data. 2009-2023 Summary. http://climod2.nrcc.cornell.edu/

Please take time to think about Safety during what can be a busy, pressured harvest!

2026 Dairy Feeder School
October 27th 9:30am - Registration

Location: EZ Acres, 5950 West Scott Rd, Homer, NY 13077

A one day on-farm training, offered in English and Spanish. There will be stations with hands-on activities and demos.

Topics Covered During Feeder School:

- Economics and importance of feeding and feed management
- Dry matter and feeder math basics: how to measure DM and refusals, and adjust ration
- Feed consistency and TMR audits
- Troubleshooting mixer wagons
- Bunk silo management, map out bunk, packing density and preservation, and feed out
- Safety

Who Should Attend:

- Currently feeding dairy cows and want to learn more about the how and why of feeding activities
- Interested in becoming a cow feeder and want to increase knowledge of cow feeding
- Interested in learning more about how to improve the feeding process on the farm

Cost: $50 per person **lunch included**

Click link to register: https://scnydfc.cce.cornell.edu/event_preregistration_new.php?id=2796

Managing Glyphosate-Resistant Waterhemp in NY Corn and Soybeans

By: Dr. Vipan Kumar, Soil and Crop Sciences Section, Cornell Cooperative Extension

Waterhemp (*Amaranthus tuberculatus*) is a summer annual broadleaf weed native to the United States. It is one of the most problematic pigweed species in the Midwest and it is spreading throughout the eastern and southern United States. The increasing spread of waterhemp in New York (NY) cropping systems has become a concern as it is a highly prolific weed that has evolved resistance to many herbicides (seven groups: 2, 4, 5, 9, 14, 15 and 27). A recent survey by the Weed Science Society of America has ranked waterhemp as the most troublesome and hard-to-control weed in agronomic crops.

Identifying features

Waterhemp is often confused with other pigweeds. Unlike other pigweeds, waterhemp leaves and stems are smooth, green, red, green-red striped and hairless, whereas redroot and smooth pigweed have hair on stem. The leaf stalk (petiole) of waterhemp is usually shorter (half as long as the blade than the leaf blade) and is one of the key characteristics to distinguish it from Palmer amaranth. The inflorescences on waterhemp have slender branches that are typically less than 6 inches. For more details on waterhemp identification, read Cornell University pigweed identification fact sheet.

Waterhemp biology

Waterhemp is an erect plant that grows up to 8 feet tall, with glossy alternate-ovate shaped leaves (Figure 1). Seedlings are light green to red-pink with prominent veins, and a shallow notch at the leaf tip growing 1.24 inches per day. Mature plants can reach up to 2.5 to 8 feet tall with male and female green flowers produced by separate plants. Female waterhemp plant under favorable conditions can produce as many as 1 million seeds, but 35,000-200,000 seeds are usually reported when they grow in corn-soybean fields. Waterhemp seeds remain viable in the soil for 5 to 6 years. If left uncontrolled, waterhemp can significantly reduce soybean yields by as much as 63% and corn up to 74%.

Herbicide resistance status

Herbicide-resistant waterhemp has become a significant problem in the United States. Waterhemp populations resistant to ALS inhibitors (Group 2: Harmony, Classic), synthetic auxins (Group 4: Clarity, 2,4-D), photosystem ll inhibitors (Group 5: Atrazine), 5-enolpyruvylshikimate-3-phosphate synthase (EPSPS) inhibitors (Group 9: Roundup), PPO inhibitors (Group 14: Cobra, Flexstar), long-chain fatty acid inhibitors (Group 15: Dual II Magnum), and HPPD inhibitors (Group 27: Callisto) have been reported in the United States. More recently, glyphosate-resistant waterhemp has been reported in several western and central NY counties. For instance, two waterhemp populations from Seneca County, NY have been found 5.6- to 8.3-fold resistance to glyphosate1. Furthermore, glyphosate-resistant populations are also potentially resistant to other herbicides, including atrazine (Group 5), chlorimuron/ thifensulfuron (Group 2) and mesotrione (Group 27).

Management options

Sanitation and cleaning. Farm equipment and machinery (such as combines) are known to transport weed seeds from contaminated fields to cleaned fields. Proper cleaning and sanitation of farm equipment after use in waterhemp infested fields can help to reduce its further spread.

Cultural practices. Cultural practices such as rotation of annual grain crops with perennial forage crops, fall-seeded cover crops and termination after corn-soybean planting2, and deep tillage as needed can help reduce waterhemp densities. The use of best agronomic practices, including proper selection of competitive crop variety/ hybrid, optimum seeding rates, reduced row spacing, planting times, and proper fertility and irrigation management can increase corn and soybean competitiveness with waterhemp.

Mechanical practices. Tillage greatly reduces waterhemp emergence, and moldboard plowing is more effective than chisel plowing for reducing emergence. Inversion tillage, ridge-tillage, and interrow mowing in row crops can be a component of waterhemp management strategies. Recent work has shown that Weed Zapper (electric weeder) and harvest weed seed control (both seed impact mill and chaff lining) can help managing waterhemp in soybean by reducing seedbank in the soil 3,4,5.

Chemical options. Herbicide programs that utilize more than two effective sites of action, and a management plan that is diverse and includes multiple control tactics, are generally most effective for glyphosate-resistant waterhemp management.

Soybean: Preemergence herbicides which are premix of 2 to 3 active ingredients such as acetochlor, chlorimuron, cloransulam-methyl, S-metolachlor, metribuzin, flumioxazin and postemergence herbicides such as glufosinate (Liberty Link soybean)6, 2,4-D choline (Enlist E3 soybean), lactofen, and fomesafen can effectively control glyphosate-resistant waterhemp.

Corn: Preemergence herbicides which are premix of 2 to 3 active ingredients such as acetochlor, atrazine, bicyclopyrone, clopyralid, S-metolachlor, mesotrione, and postemergence herbicides such as glufosinate (Liberty Link corn), 2,4-D (Enlist corn), dicamba, tembotrione, tolpyralate, etc. can provide effective control of glyphosate-resistant waterhemp.

Soil residual herbicides (acetochlor, dimethenamid-P) applied postemergence in corn and soybean can provide extended overlapping residual activity for season-long control of waterhemp. *

Targeting Difficult-to-Control Weeds in Late Summer

compiled from AI sources

Late summer presents a unique, strategic window for managing some of the most stubborn weeds in pastures, fencerows, and fields. As daylight hours dwindle, perennial weeds shift their physiological focus from foliage production to transporting nutrient reserves down into their root systems for winter survival. By applying systemic treatments during this downward vascular flow, land managers can achieve significantly higher root kill compared to spring applications.

Successfully reclaiming fields requires a tailored approach targeting the specific anatomical defenses of late summer's most problematic species.

1. Knapweed Species (Spotted, Diffuse, and Meadow)
Knapweed species are highly aggressive perennials or biennials notorious for releasing allelopathic chemicals (such as catechin) into the soil, which actively suppress surrounding desirable vegetation. [1] Link to a knapweed id guide: https://renzweedscience.cals.wisc.edu/wp-content/uploads/sites/177/2025/05/09-knapweeds.pdf

The Late-Summer Challenge: By late summer, knapweeds have often initiated flowering or seed set. Their seeds can remain viable in the soil for up to eight years, making seed prevention paramount.
Control Strategies:
Mechanical: Hand-pulling or digging works well for isolated patches, provided you extract the deep taproot. If flower heads have already formed, you must carefully bag and dispose of them in municipal waste to prevent seeds from ripening and detaching on-site. Mowing alone is generally ineffective, as the plant quickly adapts and blooms on shorter stems.

Chemical: Late-summer applications should occur while the plant is still actively growing (ideally before full seed maturity). Selective broadleaf herbicides containing aminopyralid or triclopyr provide excellent systemic suppression without harming established forage grasses. Non-selective options like glyphosate are highly effective but will kill surrounding grass cover.

2. Common Milkweed (*Asclepias syriaca*)
While invaluable for monarch butterfly habitats, milkweed can quickly dominate pastures and crowds out high-quality forage. It reproduces both via airborne, fluffy seeds and an expansive, deep-creeping rhizome system.

The Late-Summer Challenge: Milkweed leaves feature a thick cuticle and a fibrous exterior that resists simple contact sprays. Its massive underground root reserves allow it to aggressively sprout back if top-killed too early in the season.

Control Strategies:
Timing: Treat in late summer or early fall (September to mid-October) before a killing frost while leaves are still green and functional.

Chemical: Milkweed is notoriously less susceptible to many standard broadleaf herbicides. Systemic treatments like glyphosate provide the most consistent control (roughly 80% or better effectiveness). If trying to preserve underlying grass, high-rate formulations of dicamba or products containing triclopyr can offer decent suppression.

3. Hemp Dogbane (*Apocynum cannabinum*)
Often confused with common milkweed due to its white, milky sap, hemp dogbane is significantly more dangerous to livestock—containing toxic cardiac glycosides that remain lethal even when dried in stored hay.
The Late-Summer Challenge: Dogbane is structurally tougher than milkweed, featuring a distinctly waxy leaf cuticle that repels water-based droplets and a highly branched, woody lower stem.

Control Strategies:
The Mow-and-Regrow Method: To bypass the woody stem defense, mow the dogbane in mid-summer (around July) to force the plant to push up thinner, tender vegetative regrowth. Wait until August or September when this regrowth reaches 12 to 18 inches tall before spraying.
Chemical: Apply a systemic herbicide like fluroxypyr + triclopyr (e.g., PastureGard HL) or triclopyr ester (e.g., Remedy Ultra), which boasts a 90% or higher control rate. **Crucial Step:** You must include a high-quality surfactant to break the surface tension of the waxy leaf cuticle and prevent the herbicide from simply running off.

4. Horsenettle (*Solanum carolinense*)
A deeply rooted perennial in the nightshade family, horsenettle features sharp spines along its stems and leaves, making pastures physically unpalatable and toxic to grazing animals.

The Late-Summer Challenge: Its vast, horizontal root network stores massive quantities of energy. Contact herbicides only burn off the foliage, triggering immediate regrowth from underground nodes.

Control Strategies:
Timing: The optimum window is late August through early September, specifically when the plant is flowering but prior to the formation of its green, berry-like fruit.
Chemical: Apply selective systemic broadleaf herbicides such as aminopyralid or dicamba. Ensure the application is made at least two weeks before the first anticipated hard frost so the plant has enough active vascular movement to carry the toxin deep into its roots. Because of the extensive root system, plan for a 2-to-3-year eradication window.

5. Bedstraw Species (Catchweed and Smooth Bedstraw)
Catchweed bedstraw (*Galium aparine*) behaves primarily as a climbing annual with Velcro-like hairs, whereas Smooth Bedstraw (*Galium mollugo*) is a creeping perennial powered by aggressive rhizomes. Both quickly form dense, tangled mats that choke out light and water.

Continued on page 5.

The Late-Summer Challenge: Smooth bedstraw thrives in low-fertility, acidic soils and is actively avoided by livestock, allowing it to spread unchecked in overgrazed pastures. Catchweed bedstraw drops thousands of highly hook-laden fruits that hitchhike onto animals and farm machinery.

Control Strategies:
Cultural & Mechanical: For perennial smooth bedstraw, late summer is the perfect time to pull soil samples and apply lime to push the pH back up above 6.0, favoring competitive forage grasses. Avoid mowing annual catchweed bedstraw down to a couple of inches; research indicates low-height cutting can actually stimulate its biomass production by up to 30%.

Chemical: High-volume pasture renovations using glyphosate in late summer offer excellent control over the perennial crowns of smooth bedstraw. For selective management in pastures, specialty herbicides like aminopyralid + fluroxypyr formulations (e.g., GrazonNext HL) or triclopyr + 2,4-D combos (e.g., Crossbow) yield up to 95–99% control when applied to actively growing summer tissue.

Best Practices for Late-Summer Spraying

Watch the Thermometer: Avoid spraying post-emergent systemic herbicides if temperatures exceed 85°F. High heat causes plants to close their stomata to conserve water, which severely limits herbicide absorption and can result in chemical leaf burn rather than a systemic root kill.

Mind the Rain: Ensure a dry window of at least 24 hours post-application to prevent the active ingredients from washing off the leaf blades. [1]
Equipment Sanitation: Thoroughly pressure-wash mowers, tractors, and balers when moving from a weed-infested field to a clean one. Seeds from knapweed, dogbane, and bedstraw are easily transported via machinery chasses.

Tips for added surfactants:

1. Non-Ionic Surfactants (NIS)
This is the most common adjuvant required by standard broadleaf herbicide labels. It lowers the surface tension of the water droplets, allowing the chemical to spread flat across the leaf surface rather than localized into balls and rolling off.

Label Specifications: Labels like GrazonNext HL and Remedy Ultra typically recommend a high-quality, non-ionic surfactant containing at least 80% to 90% active surface-acting agents.

Standard Label Mix Rate: Generally 1 to 2 quarts per 100 gallons of water (0.25% to 0.5% volume-to-volume ratio), or roughly 0.5 ounces per gallon for small-scale spot sprayers. [

2. Methylated Seed Oils (MSO) & Crop Oil Concentrates (COC)
For late-summer perennials with extreme waxy cuticles like hemp dogbane, a simple surfactant sometimes isn't enough. Oils actively dissolve or soften the waxy outer layer of the weed, maximizing systemic absorption. [1] [MSOs are expensive but if the label says that they are required you will sacrifice the product control if you substitute a different type of surfactant -jd]

Label Specifications: Specialty labels like PastureGard HL specify that an oil-based adjuvant or d-limonene methylated oil is ideal for breaking down tough, woody, or waxy leaf barriers.

Standard Label Mix Rate: Typically 1% volume-to-volume (1 gallon per 100 gallons of water) or around 1.3 ounces per gallon for spot applications.
Common Examples: Cide-Kick II (a highly recommended d-limonene/oil activator on Corteva labels) or generic MSO Concentrate. [[Remember the label is the law! These are general recommendations. Always follow the label! -jd]

3. Ammonium Sulfate (AMS)
If you are utilizing non-selective options like glyphosate to completely clear a patch of milkweed or bedstraw, the label will strongly emphasize adding nitrogen-based water conditioners. Late-summer water supplies can be high in hard water minerals (calcium and magnesium), which bind to glyphosate molecules and neutralize them before they can enter the weed.

Label Specifications: AMS binds to hard water minerals, ensuring 100% of the active herbicide remains free to kill the target weed.

Standard Label Mix Rate: Standard dry AMS is mixed at 8.5 to 17 pounds per 100 gallons of water. Common Examples: AMS Liquid Soluble or dry spray-grade ammonium sulfate.

Safety & Tank Mixing Checklist
Sequence Matters: Always add your water first, then your water conditioner (like AMS), followed by your targeted herbicide (like Remedy Ultra or GrazonNext HL), and save your surfactant/oil (NIS or MSO) for last to prevent excessive tank foaming.

Avoid Over-Oiling in Heat: Do not use heavy oil concentrates (COC/MSO) if late-summer temperatures exceed 85°F, as they can cause rapid, localized leaf burn that prevents the herbicide from traveling down to the roots. ★

Continued from page 6—Corn Rootworm Resistance)

Experts urge a multi-pronged defense:

- **Rotate crops**, even periodically, to break pest cycles.
- **Rotate traits** annually to reduce resistance selection.
- **Scout fields**, especially around mid-July, to catch root damage early.
- **Use insecticides or biologicals selectively**, only when j justified by data.
- **Avoid overusing RNAi**, to preserve its efficacy.

"**You can't manage what you don't measure,**" said Lane. "Sticky traps tell you more than coffee-shop talk."

As **next-generation traits** are expected around **2028**, researchers caution that **evolution moves fast**. Without coordinated stewardship from growers, retailers, and seed companies, even the most advanced tools will eventually fail.

"**We can't keep relying on the same traits and think resistance won't follow,**" said Maertens. Spencer put it bluntly:
"Rootworm is a resistance incubator. Without action, we're only buying time."

Source: https://www.agrolatam.com/crops/corn-rootworm-bt-resistance-stewardship-midwest-2026/

Additional reference: Handy Bt Trait Table Updated August 2025 - https://www.texasinsects.org/uploads/4/9/3/0/49304017/bttraittable_aug2025.pdf

Corn Rootworm Resistance Escalates Across Corn Belt, Raising Alarms Over Bt Trait Breakdown and Stewardship

By: AgroLatam.com

Bt traits are under siege as corn rootworm resurges in the Midwest. Farmers and scientists warn: stewardship now or yield losses ahead.

AgroLatam U.S. is the U.S.-based editorial team of AgroLatam, covering U.S. agriculture and agribusiness, including markets, policy, trade, and technology, with a focus on links between the United States and Latin America.

What happened: On **January 21, 2026**, leading entomologists and Midwest farmers raised fresh concerns as **corn rootworm resistance to Bt traits** was documented across key **U.S. corn states**, including **Iowa and Illinois**. The development threatens **corn yields**, increases **input costs**, and underscores the critical importance of **stewardship** and **resistance management** in U.S. agriculture.

For decades, **Bt corn hybrids** offered effective control of **corn rootworm**, one of the costliest pests in U.S. agriculture. But new reports show **declining performance** of all four Cry proteins in western corn rootworm populations, especially in **continuous-corn systems**. Researchers say this decline is **accelerating**, driven by overuse and lack of rotation. "**Corn rootworm problems never really went away**," said **Erin Hodgson**, Extension entomologist at **Iowa State University**. "It's a highly adaptable pest, and we've created an ideal scenario for it to thrive."

RNAi trait technology, whichas shown promising results in high-pressure fields. But Hodgson warned that it too can fail without careful management: "**The more we plant, the faster we lose those tools**."

Joe Spencer, entomologist at the **University of Illinois**, said early assumptions about beetle behavior misfired. Low mortality rates and limited beetle movement enabled **resistant individuals to interbreed**, accelerating trait failure.

On the front lines, farmers like **Jim Carlson** in Iowa and **Cliff Lane** in Illinois see firsthand the **impact of poor stewardship**. Carlson recalled severe lodging during dry years, noting: "**It only takes one bad year to make up for investing in rootworm protection.**" Lane, who rotates crops and scouts fields with sticky traps, emphasized tailoring trait use to actual pest pressure: "**Unnecessary traits are money left on the table-and they speed up resistance.**"

Figure 2. Western corn rootworm adult beetles

While **European corn borer (ECB)** remains largely under control thanks to high-dose Bt traits, researchers have confirmed **isolated resistance in Canada and Connecticut**. No widespread U.S. failures have occurred, but Hodgson warns that even ECB protection could erode if vigilance fades: "**Traits don't last forever. Stewardship is what's kept ECB at bay for nearly 30 years.**"

The contrast in outcomes between rootworm and ECB highlights key biological differences: ECB moths **move more** and mix genetics, while rootworm beetles **stay local**, mating with other resistant individuals. Furthermore, ECB traits were **lethal**, while rootworm traits were only **moderately effective**, giving resistance room to build.

Industry leaders are racing to stay ahead. **Bayer** and **Corteva** have rolled out next-gen products like **SmartStax PRO**, **VT4PRO**, and **Vorceed Enlist**, which stack **Bt traits with RNAi**. Both companies emphasize that **no technology can succeed without rotation and scouting**. "**Traits are tools-not silver bullets,**" said **Brandon Walter** of Corteva. "Match trait intensity to field history."

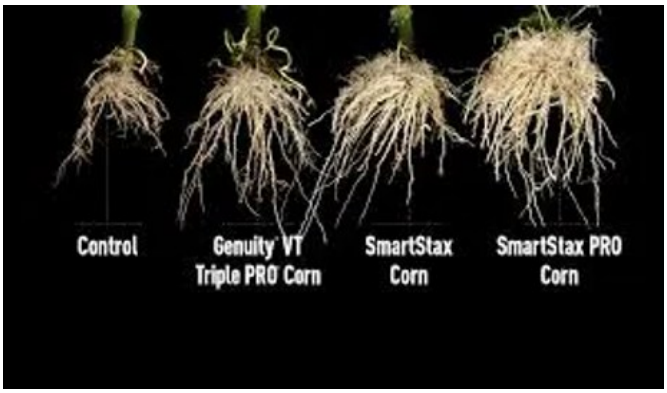

Figure 3. Rootworm feeding (right to left) on untraited corn, and roots with SmartStax, VT4 Pro, SmartStax Pro traits.

Kurt Maertens of **BASF** sees a return to **soil insecticides** in northern Iowa and southern Minnesota, where heavy corn-on-corn systems prevail. "**We stopped scouting once traits worked well-and that's when resistance came back.**"

(Continued from page 5 bottom right—Corn Rootworm Resistance)

2026 Corn Rootworm Field Observations in Central New York

Contributing Authors: Marcelo Dimase, Department of Entomology, Cornell University, Janice Degni, Field Crop Specialist, Cornell Cooperative Extension (CCE) Erik A. Smith, Field Crop Specialist CCE, and Mike Hunter, Field Crops IPM Coordinator, Cornell Integrated Pest Management

At a glance: summary of the 2026 Corn rootworm injury assessment in Central NY. Acreage is an approximate aggregate across the affected fields, as reported by growers.

What was observed

Severe corn rootworm damage is being observed in multiple continuous corn fields in Central New York in 2026.

Unexpected root node injury and goosenecking were observed across

4	22	2000+	Jul 20-Aug 21
Counties	Fields scored	Documented acres	Observation window

22 fields in Onondaga, Cortland, Cayuga, and Madison Counties. Mean node injury scores at the town level ranged from 1.65 to 2.33 based on the Iowa State 0–3 scale (Oleson et al. 2005). A score of 1.0 represents one root node destroyed. A score of 2.0 represents two root nodes destroyed. A score of 3.0 represents three root nodes destroyed. Injury to each root node may correspond to approximately 15% yield loss.

Bt traits confirmed include AMXT, Qrome, Vorceed, and Duracade Viptera technology in the scored fields, which also reported medium-to-high rates of neonicotinoid seed treatment. These observations document injury but, by themselves, do not determine resistance or establish the cause of reduced control. Growers with continuous corn should document root injury, lodging, scout for adults, and establish a plan to manage rootworm pressure in 2027.

Management context

Table 1. 2026 Corn Rootworm Node Injury: Observations by Town

Town	County	Fields	Mean Injury	Source
Auburn	Cayuga	1	2.05	Cornell Entomology
Scipio	Cayuga	8	1.65	Pioneer
Venice	Cayuga	4	2.13	Pioneer
Preble	Cortland	4	1.86	Pioneer + Cornell CCE
Munnsville	Madison	3	2.20	Cornell Entomology
Tully	Onondaga	2	2.33	Pioneer

The common thread across many affected fields is continuous corn production, which greatly increases the risk of corn rootworm pressure. These 2026 observations support renewed attention to scouting, rotation, resistance stewardship, and diversified management. Additional scientific testing is needed before attributing injury in any field to resistance.

The following inputs were reported by growers for the scored fields. This information is included for completeness of the record and does not characterize product performance.

Seed treatment (all scored fields): a neonicotinoid seed treatment was reported on every field; a majority of fields were reported as planted with a high-rate neonicotinoid seed treatment option.

Soil-applied insecticide at planting: no grower with a reported field used a soil-applied insecticide at planting on the scored fields.

At-plant rootworm deterrent (subset of scored fields): one grower reported using an at-plant rootworm deterrent product on their scored fields. This product is a rootworm deterrent, not an insecticide.

Foliar insecticide (subset of scored fields): a subset of fields was reported to have received a foliar insecticide application in-season.

What growers should do


Lodged corn


A range of of root pruning

• Scout fields for lodging and adult beetles, especially fields with several consecutive years of corn.

• Dig and wash roots where injury is suspected and document the extent of root pruning.

• Record hybrid/trait package, seed treatment, field history, and any at-plant or foliar insecticide use.

- Prioritize crop rotation out of corn in fields with substantial injury. Rotation remains a key tool for New York rootworm management.
- Where continuous corn will remain, use multiple management tactics and avoid relying repeatedly on a single control approach.

- **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.** *

Cornell Cooperative Extension
South Central NY Dairy and Field Crops Program
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Inside this Issue:

Upcoming Events Calendar—fall 2026

September 2 5:30—7pm 55 Silverstein Rd., Nineveh	**Beginning Farmer Pasture Walk—Silverwind Farm,** Discussion with Broome County SWCD and CCE's SCNY Dairy and Field Crops Team You will learn about rotational grazing systems, water management systems, forage quality, and more! This event is perfect for beginning farmers and farmers wanting to learn more about the importance of pasture management. Please register each person separately if you wish to register more than one person. To register: https://pub.cce.cornell.edu/ev...
September 17 1-3 pm	Corn Silage Burn-Down Clinic— E. Wenger Farm, 8206 Baptist Hill Rd., Port Byron. **Bring Your Samples**
September 18 1-3 pm	Corn Silage Burn-Down Clinic— R&M Farm and Hardware, LLC 480 US-11, Marathon, NY 13803 **Bring Your Samples**
September 25 11 am — 2 pm 4358 Crains Mills Road, Truxton	**Bale Grazing Pasture Walk—Hillside Farms** This walk is part of a National USDA-NRCS CIG Grant by the University of Kentucky Research Foundation entitled: Bale Grazing: A Practical, Low-Cost, and Environmentally-Sound Management Strategy to Winter Beef Cattle. The project partner states are Kentucky, New York, North Carolina, Virginia and West Virginia. You can learn more by visiting https://news.ca.uky.edu/article/usda-innovation-grant-bale-grazing-study-yielding-positive-results-kentucky
October 27 11 am — 2 pm 5950 West Scott Rd., Homer	**2026 Dairy Feeder School—EZ Acres Dairy** Cost: $50 per person **lunch included** See details p. 7. Click link to register: https://scnydfc.cce.cornell.edu/event_preregistration_new.php?id=2796

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