Tuesday – June 30, 2020

BILL: And good morning and welcome into our Tuesday edition of Ag Talk. This is Bill Rice along with Ed Lentz and today, Ed, we’re talking about hatching rootworm.

ED: This is the time of year that the rootworms will start to hatch in the soil and even though it has not been a serious problem in Ohio, in the United States it’s the number one insect problem for corn. Probably why we don’t see it as much is we rotate corn with soybeans and so when this year’s rootworm beetles lay eggs, next year they are in the bean field they don’t do anything so we don’t have eggs in the corn field. But in our major corn producing states, like Nebraska, Iowa, and Illinois, we have a lot of fields out there growing corn after corn. They can economically make it work cause they are pushing 400 bushels a lot of years and then also they got a lot more livestock out there to take care of so they got a big local market. We still got to be aware of it because it can be a problem in Ohio here. You know Bill, I don’t like to get on the ground and dig up plants and look at roots and all that, so one of things you can know about the time period when these things start hatching is watch the lightning bugs. When you see the lightning bugs at night, the growing degree days or the temperature accumulation for lightning bugs to emerge and start to show their light is about the same time as when rootworms hatch. And so we’re there and so we know that we do have probably rootworm activity going if it is in our fields. Last year you may not have seen any of this. Heavy rains are really tough on the survival of rootworm larvae but this year we’ve been much dryer so we would expect these rootworms to hatch and that are out there would survive. A lot of farmers use what we call the Bt stacked hybrids which means they have one trait in there to give them a GMO protection against rootworms. In other parts of the country resistance is already built up to this Bt gene. However, in Ohio we’re fortunate as at this time we have not seen the resistance of this Bt protein that they have out in Iowa or Nebraska. So we always keep an eye on it, the university looks at that to see if there’s a change. The place we have the greatest risk for rootworms is going to be corn after corn and probably people that do that are going to be in the livestock industry, the dairy and the beef industry where they have corn sileage out there so they need to be on the lookout. What this rootworm can do is they can cause serious lodging in the plant and also cause problems and have issues if it gets dry cause they have less roots in there. If you want to take counts like the entomologist do in the latter part of July after the larvae have completed there development and the damage, they will dig up roots and actually look and see what the feeding scores have been and much is out there. So this is more academic but people will know that they’re still out there and a lot of us use resistant Bt corn and it’s probably not going to be an issue.

BILL: Thank you Ed. For Ag Talk this is Bill Rice along with Ed Lentz. Good morning to you.

Ed: Good morning.