

Hello. My name is Bailey Tubertini; I work for Larry Adams and Chris Johnson. We are part of the Southern Insect Management Research Unit (SIMRU) and are a branch of the United States Department of Agriculture. The majority of the research our unit is involved with is sweetpotatoes. We have a number of studies that we monitor and use to conduct various forms of research. However, sweetpotatoes are not the only thing that we work with out here. We check moth traps once a week to get a count for the area surrounding Stoneville. Finally, we have a specific study containing corn and sweetpotatoes that we put pitfall traps in to estimate underground pest pressure, specifically wireworms.

Our sweetpotato plots are divided into five different plots. We have three plots out off experiment station rd, one study at the cages, and one in Mound Bayou. We collect insect weekly using sweep nets. We have collected soil samples from our nematode and nematode variety study. Along with these weekly duties, we continuously try to keep our plots free of weeds.

Our unit has been in charge of checking various moth traps around the Stoneville area since 1992. We are looking for two specific species of moth the zea which is the bollworm and the virescent which is the budworm. This is just to give an estimate of the moths in the area.

This year was the first of a three year study involving sweetpotatoes and corn. The study is to try and get a legitimate estimate of wireworm pressure on these plants. We the followed the directions outlined in "Seed Bait For Soil Insects" to correctly gather the pests. Wireworms are the immature stage of the click beetle. The wireworms make large feeding holes and and feeding tunnels on sweetpotatoes that can seriously damage

the yield. The method used to catch these pests is small traps four inches deep and six to nine inches wide. We use corn that has been presoaked in water as bait for the wireworms. After placing the traps we wait at least ten days to give the corn enough time to germinate, which is the most optimal stage for attracting wireworms. Then we dig up all of the traps and sift through the dirt to separate the wireworms and collect them. We then write which week, treatment, and plot that we caught wireworms in. At the end of the year the plots containing wireworms will be used to estimate wireworm pressure for the entire study.

Overall this summer has been informative and fun. We had a few new studies that were different than I have ever done before and turned out to be quite interesting even though some days the temperature reached three figures. I hope to return next summer and continue helping and learning about the Southern Insect Management Research Unit.