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AVITROL

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Now that Avitrol has been registered for use on field corn, the next step is to get the chemical registered for use on other crops. Two of the most important are sweet corn and sunflowers. Accordingly, personnel at the Bureau of Sport Fisheries and Wildlife, Sandusky, Ohio field station planted 16 experimental plots each in Sandusky and Ottawa Counties in Ohio this past summer to gather data on the efficacy of Avitrol when used on sweet corn and sunflowers. Of the 16 plots in each county, eight were sunflower plots, eight were corn plots. We applied Avitrol to four of the eight plots containing each crop in each area. So, in effect, in each county we had four Avitrol sunflower plots, four control sunflower plots, four Avitrol sweet corn plots, and four control sweet corn plots.

Avitrol cracked corn bait, the standard material put out by Avitrol, Inc., was applied to the plots at the rate of 1 lb. per acre scattered over the middle one-third of the field. It was applied every 6 days unless one-half inch of rain fell in the interim. At that point the crop was treated again.

We assessed damage in the sweet corn plots by collecting 600 ears located in 15, 40-ear plots randomly located throughout the field. They were brought back to the lab and row-centimeter damage assessment was performed on them. A row-centimeter damage assessment means simply applying a centimeter ruler to the rows of damaged corn and tabulating the length of damage corn in centimeters along each row on an ear.

The field work phase of the sweet corn project is completed, and we have done a rough analysis of the data gathered. The data indicate, for the plots in Ottawa County, that 1 lb. per acre of Avitrol bait applied every 6 days, is not enough. There were no significant differences between treatment and control plots; in fact, the Avitrol plots sustained a little more damage than the control plots. However, this was abnormal corn; we could not plant it until the middle of July, and then the weather conditions became dry. The stunted corn produced nubbin ears at a time when the bird pressure was heavier than we had anticipated. Unfortunately, in Erie County where we had hoped to get moderate damage, we got virtually none at all; the birds just were not around at the time that the sweet corn was vulnerable. Therefore, we had no damage in one area and extreme damage with no protection in the other area; and I would have to say it looks like we will have to go back to the drawing board and try something else next year.

Regarding the sunflower test in Erie County, the indications are that the damage is very spotty. One of the fields was damaged severely, but some of the other fields have not been damaged to any extent. In Ottawa County, however, the fields have been hit extremely hard, to the extent that we partly abandoned our game plan when we saw that the fields were being eaten

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up and upped the baiting rate to 5 lb. per acre. Damage will be assessed in Ottawa County within the next 2 weeks.