



## The Season Is Off and Running – and So Are the Insects

As planting progresses across the Northern Corn Belt, the 2025 season is gaining momentum—but so is early insect activity. One pest making an early and aggressive appearance is black cutworm (BCW). Warm conditions and favorable winds have pushed significant moth flights into Iowa, Minnesota, and Wisconsin, setting the stage for early larval feeding in susceptible corn fields. Whether you're in conventional tillage or managing high-residue systems, now is the time to monitor closely and prepare for timely scouting and rescue treatments.

### Couple Regional Migration Summary

- **Iowa:** Significant flights in Story, Hamilton, Polk, Lucas, and Pottawattamie counties from April 17–29. Cutting projected to begin mid-late May (~300 GDUs post-flight).
- **Minnesota:** Traps in McLeod, Meeker, Martin, and Rock counties reported early flights (April 19–25).
- **Wisconsin:** DATCP recorded intense flights in Dane and Sheboygan by April 16. Statewide totals exceed 700 moths from 63 traps.



### Scouting and Management Recommendations

- **Timing:** Begin scouting fields approximately 300 degree-days after a significant flight has been recorded. Which in most areas will be the next 7-10 days.
- **Field Selection:** Prioritize scouting in fields with no-till practices, recent cover crop termination, or a history of winter annual weeds, as these conditions are conducive to BCW egg laying.
- **Scouting Indicators:** Look for signs of leaf feeding on weeds or corn seedlings, and check for cut plants near the soil surface. Larvae are typically found under soil clods or debris near damaged plants.
- **Thresholds:** Consider treatment if 2–5% of plants are cut, and larvae are present. Rescue treatments are more effective than preventative applications due to the sporadic nature of BCW infestations.



Images credit: John Obermeyer, Purdue Extension Entomology. Source: Purdue University Extension, Pest & Crop Newsletter. "Some Cutworms Out and About – Still Too Early for Black Cutworm?" April 2024.

### Monitoring Resources

- Iowa State University IPM
- University of Minnesota Extension
- Wisconsin DATCP Pest Bulletin

# Planting Progress Update (based on the USDA Crop Progress; Released May 12, 2025)

## Corn Planting Progress

The 2025 planting season has shifted into high gear across much of the Corn Belt, with the May 12 USDA Crop Progress Report showing strong advances in nearly every major corn-producing state. After a cool and wet start in April, a stretch of favorable weather allowed planters to roll aggressively through early May—pushing progress ahead of five-year averages in nearly all key regions. North and South Dakota saw some of the most dramatic gains, with planting in North Dakota more than doubling its typical pace. Minnesota, Iowa, and Nebraska also posted impressive week-over-week progress, signaling a strong early start for much of the Upper Midwest.

State-by-state highlights:

- **Illinois:** 54% planted (5-year average: 48%)
- **Iowa:** 76% planted (5-year average: 69%)
- **Michigan:** 42% planted (5-year average: 31%)
- **Minnesota:** 75% planted (5-year average: 61%)
- **Nebraska:** 73% planted (5-year average: 65%)
- **North Dakota:** 41% planted (5-year average: 16%)
- **South Dakota:** 69% planted (5-year average: 43%)
- **Wisconsin:** 44% planted (5-year average: 40%)



Research plot in Olivia, MN, that was planted on 4/26/25 and emerged on 5/8/25.

## Soybean Planting Progress

Soybean planting has surged across the Midwest as growers took full advantage of an extended window of dry, workable conditions. According to the May 12, 2025 USDA Crop Progress Report, soybean acres are going in at a brisk pace, with most major states ahead—or well ahead—of their five-year averages. Iowa, Nebraska, and Minnesota are leading the charge, with rapid planting progress helping many growers approach the halfway mark or beyond. South Dakota and North Dakota have seen the most dramatic improvements year-over-year, with planting in North Dakota more than three times its average pace. Even Wisconsin and Illinois are tracking slightly above historical benchmarks. With the forecast still cooperative across much of the region, many growers remain optimistic about completing soybean planting in a timely fashion and setting up for a strong emergence window.

State-by-state highlights:

- **Illinois:** 51% planted (5-year average: 48%)
- **Iowa:** 64% planted (5-year average: 52%)
- **Michigan:** 29% planted (5-year average: 30%)
- **Minnesota:** 52% planted (5-year average: 37%)
- **Nebraska:** 62% planted (5-year average: 46%)
- **North Dakota:** 26% planted (5-year average: 8%)
- **South Dakota:** 51% planted (5-year average: 23%)
- **Wisconsin:** 40% planted (5-year average: 30%)



Renk research plot getting planted in Tonica, IL, on 5/8/25.

Source: USDA-NASS Crop Progress Report, Week Ending May 11, 2025. Data reflects percent of acres planted by state and historical five-year averages. For full report, visit [www.nass.usda.gov](http://www.nass.usda.gov).