Using Bait Balls to Scout Your Field for Wireworms
March 2014
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Wireworms have become of increasing concern to growers across PEI. In the spring, when present in a field, wireworms are attracted to the CO₂ produced by germinating seeds and decaying organic material. Scouting your fields prior to planting using bait balls will help to determine if you have a developing wireworm problem. Bait balls can be made ahead of time and frozen, or made in the field. A cup of cut up carrots can also be used in the same manner as a bait ball. Install approximately 15 to 20 bait balls per acre at random, however; if you suspect you have wireworms in your field target areas where damage has been previously suspected or observed.

Bait balls should be placed four to six inches deep in the soil beginning when the soil reaches approximately 10°C and wireworms are becoming active. Be sure to put a pin flag through the middle of each bait ball to mark their location in the field. Check and replace bait balls every 4 to 5 days until planting. Bait balls can be removed using a shovel or trowel and pulled apart by hand to look for wireworms. For most effective use keep the soil clear of any other green matter within 1 meter of each bait ball. The threshold for wireworms is 1 to 2 per bait trap.

Figure 1. Example of randomly placed bait traps
To make a bait ball you will need:
1 – 1 ½ cups Oats or Flour
1 - 2 Tbsp Honey
Water
Bowl or bucket for mixing
Pin flag to mark location in field

Mix together to form a paste and then shape into a ball approximately the size of a tennis or baseball.

For video demonstration of how to make a bait ball please refer to following Syngenta Canada YouTube video (2011):  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=t4iEuyuWDhk

For visual demonstration of how to remove bait balls from a field please refer to the following Purdue Extension Entomology YouTube video (2013):  http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=lq8j55of1x8