

SUGARBEET ROOT MAGGOT FORECAST FOR THE 2026 GROWING SEASON

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The 2026 risk map for sugarbeet root maggot (SBRM) fly activity in the Red River Valley appears in the figure below. Although root maggot fly activity had been lower in 2024 when compared to several of the previous years, population levels increased slightly in 2025. The results of followup ratings of SBRM feeding injury in growers' fields suggested that, despite the modest increase in SBRM flight activity, fields sustained slightly lower root maggot damage than had been observed in 2024. Nonetheless, several areas are still at moderate to high risk of economic loss from this perennial pest.

Areas at highest risk of economically damaging SBRM infestations in 2025 will include rural Auburn, Bowesmont, Buxton, Nash, Reynolds, St. Thomas, and Veseleyville, ND, as well as Ada, Eldred, Rockwell, Sabin, and Stephen, MN (see figure below). Moderate risk of significant SBRM feeding injury is expected in areas bordering high-risk zones, as well as fields near Bathgate, Cavalier, Crystal, Grafton, Grand Forks, Hamilton, Hoople, Manvel, Oakwood, and Thompson, ND, as well as Borup, Crookston, Donaldson, East Grand Forks, Euclid, Key West, Hadler, Hallock, Oslo, and Tabor, MN. The remainder of the production area is at low risk from this pest.

Proximity to previous-year beet fields where populations were high and/or control was unsatisfactory increases risk. Areas where high fly activity occurred in 2025 should be monitored closely in 2026. Sugarbeet growers in high-risk areas should use an aggressive insecticidal approach to SBRM control and also anticipate needing to apply a postemergence rescue insecticide. Growers in moderate-risk areas using insecticidal seed treatments for at-plant protection should monitor fly activity levels closely in their area and be ready to apply additive protection if justified. Pay close attention to fly activity levels in late May through June to determine the need for a postemergence insecticide application.

NDSU Entomology personnel will continue to inform growers regarding SBRM activity levels and hot spots each year through radio reports, the NDSU "Crop and Pest Report" web postings, and notification of sugar cooperative agricultural staff when appropriate. Root maggot fly counts for the current growing season and those from previous years can be viewed at <https://tinyurl.com/SBRM-FlyCounts>.



Fig. 1. Anticipated risk of SBRM fly activity and damaging larval infestations in the Red River Valley.

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