

## 2021 Army Cutworm Research, Owyhee County, ID

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I know I sound just like a researcher when I say, “We need more data.” The good news is, data collection for army cutworms (ACW) isn’t rocket surgery, and any number can play. Please help.

Based on what I know now, the **chances of a big army cutworm outbreak in Owyhee County this spring seem low**. But conditions vary across the county, and ACW are *always somewhere*. The larvae should be an inch long right now, and easy to see.

### Please tell me if you see:

1. Larvae hiding under cow pies during the day.
2. Larvae feeding on seedlings, usually at night, but occasionally during the day.
3. Bare areas where cheatgrass usually grows, especially if the patches have sharp borders.

We don’t know what leads to ACW outbreaks, but my best guess is that outbreaks follow:

1. a year of dry weather through August, perhaps to increase bare soil for egg laying,
2. heavy rain in September, to germinate cheatgrass for larvae to eat,
3. lots of miller moths returning in October, to lay eggs, and
4. dry weather through January, to help larvae survive.

I compared conditions prior to this spring with those prior to the ACW outbreak in 2014. I think a big outbreak is unlikely this year because we had more precip. in the prior year, didn’t get heavy September rain to germinate cheatgrass, and I trapped only about 1/10 as many moths. This winter was drier (better for larvae), but the other factors probably outweigh that.

Factor	This year	Out-break	This year vs. outbreak year
1. Grandview precip. prior Sept. to Aug. (inches)	6.6	2.9	More than twice the prior yr. precip.
2. Grandview precip. prior Sept. (inches)	0.0	2.1	No late summer rain
3. Miller moths trapped prior Oct. (#/trap)	42	531	About 1/10 as many moths
4. Grandview precip. Oct. to Jan. (inches)	0.24	0.37	About 2/3 as much winter precip.

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**Please let me know if you see any larvae from now to May, or cheatgrass die-offs from now until this summer. [armycutworms@gmail.com](mailto:armycutworms@gmail.com)**