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2022 Army Cutworm Research, Owyhee County, Idaho

I'll be looking for army cutworm larvae and the cheatgrass die-offs they can create in Owyhee County again this spring.

Army cutworm outbreaks and die-offs seem to appear after:

1. a year of dry weather through summer,
2. fall cheatgrass germination,
3. a big flight of adult moths in October, and
4. a dry winter through January.

*We **could** have an army cutworm outbreak this spring. If you see larvae, please let me know.*

Details:

1. Dry prior year. **Yes**, we had a year of dry weather through August 2021. At Grand View, this was the third driest year (3.4 inches) since records started in 1994. The two slightly drier years were both followed by army cutworm outbreaks and cheatgrass die-offs (2003 and 2014).
2. Fall germination. **Yes**, cheatgrass germinated in some areas by last October; I noticed it between Mountain Home and Bruneau.
3. Big moth flight. **Yes**, I trapped 50% more adult moths returning to lay eggs last October than I did the previous year. **However**, this is only 10% of the number I trapped before the 2014 outbreak (I didn't trap moths before the first outbreak, in 2003).
4. Dry winter. **However**, Grand View got about twice as much precipitation (2.9 inches) October through January this winter as it did the winters before the 2003 and 2014 outbreaks and die-offs. **On the other hand**, most of this winter's precip came during October, when army cutworm eggs might not yet have hatched. Wet winters are thought to reduce the number of larvae.

Thank you!

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WANTED: Army cutworms



Please tell me if you see:

- Larvae hiding under cow pies during the day, through May.
- Larvae feeding on seedlings or shrubs, most often at night.
- Bare areas where you usually see cheatgrass, through summer.