
RESEARCH NOTES

A NOTE ON THE CUTWORM PESTS OF POTATO IN CEYLON

CUTWORMS responsible for the extensive damage done to potato in Sita Eliya, Meepilimana, Uda Radella, Pedro, Ragala and Horton plains have been identified as the following :

1. The greasy cutworm, *Agrotis ypsilon* Rott. (Fig. 1).
2. *Agrotis segetum* Sniff.
3. *Peridroma saucia* Hb.

A study of the cutworm species collected from fifty random points at the potato station, Horton plains, yielded the following information :

<i>Species</i>	<i>Numbers obtained</i>
<i>Agrotis ypsilon</i>	244
<i>Agrotis segetum</i>	89
<i>Peridroma saucia</i>	5

The females of *Agrotis ypsilon*, which appears to be the most predominant species lay their eggs on the leaves of the potato plant during the night. The eggs hatch out in approximately 6 to 7 days at room temperature, and the newly hatched larvae commence feeding on the leaves within 24 hours. The damage produced has a characteristic dotted appearance (Fig. 2).

The larvae of *A. ypsilon* have been observed to feed on the leaves throughout the first instar. It is surmised that the application of insecticidal control measures at this stage would help to reduce considerably the incidence of this pest and subsequent damage to tubers at a later stage.

The cannibalistic feeding habit and the appearance of a granulosus virus disease have been observed to act as important density governing mechanisms.

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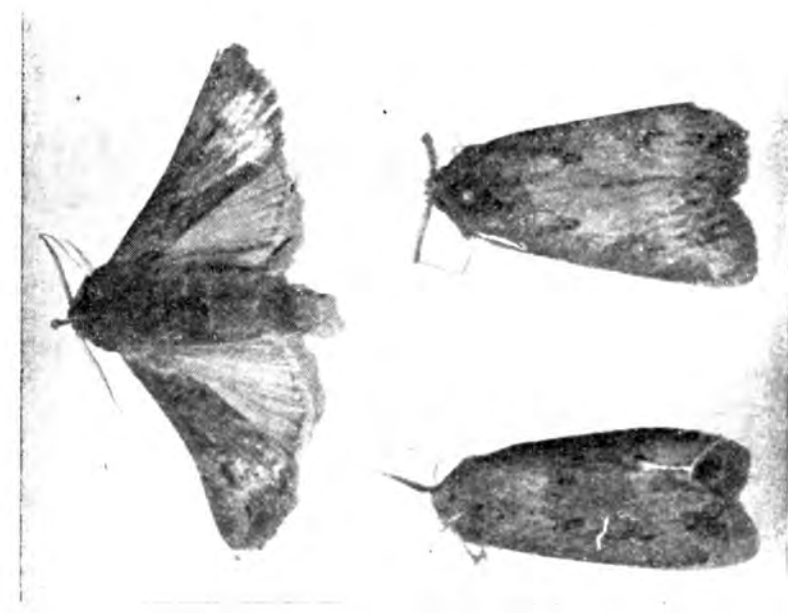


Fig. 1—The greasy cutworm, *Agrotis ypsilon* Rott.



Fig. 2—Damage to potato caused by first instar larvae
A. ypsilon