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PEST REPORT

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BLACK ARMY CUTWORM INFESTATIONS IN BEAVERFOOT

AREA NEAR GOLDEN

Jack S. Monts

Infestations of the black army cutworm, *Actebia fennica*, are causing moderate to severe defoliation of conifer seedlings planted in the Beaverfoot area near the headwaters of the Kootenay River, southeast of Golden. The pest occurred on an estimated 1,000 acres of the more than 2,500 acres of forest plantations established on sites prepared and burned in 1973 and planted in 1974 and 1975.

Masses of young larvae have stripped most of the sparse deciduous ground cover including small fireweed and willow, and are now feeding singly or in groups on the foliage of Engelmann spruce and Douglas-fir seedlings. The cutworms are presently in early to mid larval stages and will continue feeding until the latter half of June, when pupation will occur. The rate of defoliation will greatly accelerate as the larvae increase in size to maturity. The light crop of fireweed and other deciduous cover is expected to be completely devoured, which will leave only the forest seedlings as the available hosts.

Moderate to severe damage has already occurred on more than 300 acres of seedlings in lower elevation areas near Marion Lake and at Symond Creek, while light to moderate feeding is evident in plantations in the higher areas. Seedling planting in the area has been discontinued and planting crews have moved to the Sue fire area, where cutworm infestations that caused severe damage in 1973 and 1974 appear to have completely subsided.

The Beaverfoot infestation is expected to result in extensive, heavy defoliation and seedling mortality in the plantations if feeding is not arrested promptly.

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