KEEPING CHERRIES COVERED WHILE WAITING FOR COLOR AND SIZE
N. Rothwell, Extension Specialist

We have had a recent report of a ‘worm’ in dark sweet cherries. The larva found was a second or third instar plum curculio (PC). Likely with the cool season, female PC may have had a late start to egg-laying or the development of PC larvae may have been slowed. Most PC egg-laying is probably complete, but it is evident from our recent report that larvae can still be found feeding in fruit. This news is troubling and a reminder to growers to maintain good insecticide coverage through the harvest period. With the large crop of sweet cherries in northwest Michigan, many growers are waiting for dark sweets to size and/or color. During this waiting period, insecticide coverage should be maintained to protect fruit against all insect pests that still have the potential lay eggs in fruit, most specifically spotted wing Drosophila (SWD) and cherry fruit fly (CFF). We do not want to leave fruit uncovered with the potential for infestation, especially if growers are waiting for color and size. This situation is challenging as growers must maintain good coverage but still apply insecticides within the appropriate pre-harvest intervals (PHI). We have three insecticides with three-day PHIs in cherry: malathion, Sevin, and Ambush/Pounce. These materials are fair on SWD and fair to good against CFF. Growers should be sure to read the labels before applying any insecticide.