

INSECT MONITORING REPORT

Summarized Report for July 15-21, 2010

BEET LEAFHOPPERS: Beet leafhoppers (BLH) can be found in and around potato fields across the Basin. The counts were highest in the areas surrounding Mattawa and Quincy, and in Franklin County north of Pasco. Mattawa traps averaged 31 BLH/trap and ranged 8-66 BLH/trap. Traps in the North Basin (excluding Mattawa) averaged 13 BLH/trap and ranged 0-70 BLH/trap. Traps in the South Basin averaged 12 BLH/trap and ranged 0-59 BLH/trap.

Recommendations: Beet leafhoppers are important pests because they transmit BLTVA, a phytoplasma that causes purple top disease in potatoes. We recommend growers deploy at least two yellow sticky traps around the margins of each potato field to monitor BLH. Traps should be checked weekly. Treatment thresholds have not been established for BLH in potatoes, but we know the risk of BLTVA infection increases as the number of BLH increase. If the numbers build to 40-100 BLH/week, then it is probably time to worry. The risk of BLTVA infection increases as the number of BLH increase. For more information about BLH, go to ***IPM Guidelines for Insects and Mites in ID, OR, and WA Potatoes.***

POTATO TUBERWORM: Potato tuberworm (PTW) moth counts continue to be low. Only two of the survey traps had moths this week; both near the city of Pasco. These traps had only 1-2 moths/trap.

Recommendations: Potato growers in the South Basin should maintain at least one pheromone trap adjacent to each of their potato fields. PTW infestations can be highly localized, and it is risky to conclude too much from traps that are miles away from your fields. For information on setting up your own traps click on the link for "***Tuberworm Monitoring with Pheromone Traps***". The traps should be checked weekly. If the moth counts increase from week to week, then control measures may be warranted before harvest.

APHIDS: We collected aphids from four fields in Franklin County, seven fields in Grant County, and two fields in Adams County this week (13 of 30 fields sampled). None of the fields we sampled had more than 1 aphid/plant.

Recommendations: Potato growers should be checking fields regularly for aphids. Aphids can be found in fields across the Basin, and they are ready to move into your fields. Early recognition and control of aphids is the best tactic in limiting the spread of potato viruses, especially potato leafroll virus (PLRV). Even a low incidence of virus can spread rapidly if aphids go unchecked. Current recommendations are to treat short-season potatoes when there are 5 aphids/plant, and long-season storage potatoes when there is 1 aphid/plant. Higher action thresholds may be appropriate for cultivars that are less susceptible to net necrosis resulting from PLRV infection. For more information about managing aphids in potatoes go to ***IPM Guidelines for Insects and Mites in ID, OR, and WA Potatoes.***

THRIPS: Thrips can be found in almost every potato field we sample, and their populations have been slowly increasing since spring. This is not unusual. Populations of thrips tend to be low in the early spring, and build up over time as nearby fields dry down and are harvested. Thrips feed by rasping the leaf surface, which causes a brown scarring or a silvering on the leaves.

Cumulative damage on leaves from thrips feeding reduces photosynthesis, which slows growth. Damage from thrips is usually limited to the outside rows in potato fields, but can spread if populations become very large. Thrips are considered secondary potato pests; they are usually kept in check by predators and by a number of insecticides applied to control other pests in potato fields. However, if thrips populations are left unchecked they may become uncontrollably large.

CATERPILLARS: Caterpillars (loopers, cutworms, etc.) are another pest to watch for in potatoes. We are finding them in quite a few fields, and see evidence of more. They are not always easy to find when scouting fields during the day, so look for the large holes they chew in potato leaves. If you detect a caterpillar outbreak in your field, please contact Andy Jensen at 509-765-8845 or Alan Schreiber at 509-266-4348.