

Summarized Report for June 15-19, 2009

BEET LEAFHOPPERS: A line graph showing the beet leafhopper (BLH) data over time has been added to this webpage (see below). The graph will help growers follow BLH population trends in the North and South Columbia Basin this year.

In the South Columbia Basin, BLH counts ranged 1-97 per trap and averaged (30.7). In the North Columbia Basin, BLH counts ranged 0-54 per trap and averaged (17.4). These counts are similar to last week. BLH can be found all over the Basin.

Beet leafhoppers are the only known vector of BLTVA, which causes a disease commonly known as purple top. BLH populations in the Columbia Basin usually begin to build in late May and increase through June. Now is the time to closely monitor BLH populations, because most BLTVA infections occur early in the season (the first eight weeks of plant growth). Treatment thresholds have not been established for BLH in potatoes, but we know that the risk for BLTVA infection increases as the number of BLH increase. If you are finding more than 40 BLH in your traps, it may be time to get worried. We recommend that every grower deploy at least two yellow sticky traps around the margins of each potato field to monitor BLH. Follow the link to "IPM Guidelines for Insects and Mites in Potatoes" for more information about monitoring BLH and managing BLTVA (p. 23-32).

POTATO TUBERWORM MOTHS: Potato tuberworm moths (PTM) were found at two locations this week; both in Franklin County. No other project traps had PTM.

APHIDS: In the South Basin, aphid counts ranged 0-30 per plant and averaged (3.7). Aphids were seen in about one-third of the fields we sampled. Most of the counts were low (less than 1 aphid per plant). Growers in the South Basin should be on the lookout for aphids and treat as warranted (see more below).

We found a couple of winged green peach aphids while sampling fields in the North Basin, and expect to see more aphids as July approaches.

Green peach aphid (GPA) is the most efficient vector of potato leafroll virus (PLRV) which causes leafroll and tuber net necrosis in susceptible cultivars. Early recognition and control of GPA is the best tactic for limiting the spread of PLRV. Even a low incidence of PLRV can spread rapidly if GPA populations go unchecked. Current recommendations are to treat short-season potatoes when counts 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 PLRV and net necrosis. It is important to keep in mind, however, that aphids spread other viruses and can cause direct injury to plants when aphid densities are high.