

Summarized Report for June 22-26, 2009

BEET LEAFHOPPERS: We found fewer beet leafhoppers in our traps this week compared to the previous two weeks, especially in the South Basin (see graph below). In the South Columbia Basin, BLH counts ranged 0-86 per trap and averaged (20). In the North Columbia Basin, BLH counts ranged 0-54 per trap and averaged (14).

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. 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. We recommend that every grower deploy at least two yellow sticky traps around the margins of each potato field to monitor BLH. If you are finding more than 40 BLH in your traps, it may be time to get worried. 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: One potato tuberworm moth (PTM) was found in a trap near the city of Pasco this week. No other project traps had PTM. Early and mid season populations of PTM are usually light to moderate, compared to populations later in the growing season.

APHIDS: In the South Basin, aphid counts ranged 0-109 per plant; most of the fields we sampled had no aphids. Growers in the South Basin should be on the lookout for aphids and treat as warranted. There are aphids in the area ready to move into your fields.

Again, we did not find many aphids in the North Basin; just a couple of winged green peach aphids.

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.