INSECT MONITORING REPORTS
Summarized Report for May 20-26, 2010

BEET LEAFHOPPERS: Beet leafhopper (BLH) populations around potato fields in the Columbia Basin are expected to increase over the next few weeks. The highest BLH counts for this project continue to be in the Mattawa area. Last week, Mattawa traps averaged 135 BLH/trap, which is a near-record number of BLH! The counts were much lower this week, only 8 BLH/trap on average with a range of 2-25 BLH/trap. We think these counts may be artificially low because of wet conditions, i.e. the yellow sticky traps are less effective when wetted. Traps in the South Basin averaged 1.6 BLH/trap and ranged 0-9 BLH/trap; these numbers are up a little from last week. Traps in the North Basin (excluding Mattawa) averaged 0.1 BLH/trap and ranged 0-4 BLH/trap.

Recommendations: Beet leafhoppers are important pest of potatoes because they transmit a phytoplasma known as BLTVA. This is the causal agent of purple top disease in potatoes. In 2002, purple top was widespread and resulted in significant yield losses in potato fields across the Columbia Basin. It hasn't been as widespread since, but the disease continues to be a problem every year. Now is the time to monitor BLH populations closely, because potato plants are most likely to develop purple top when infected early in the season. We recommend growers deploy at least two yellow sticky traps around the margins of each potato field to monitor BLH. Treatment thresholds have not been established for BLH in potatoes, but we know that the risk of infection increases as the number of BLH increase. If you are finding 40-100 BLH/week on your yellow sticky traps, you should probably be concerned. For more information about BLH, go to ***IPM Guidelines for Insects and Mites in ID, OR, and WA Potatoes***. This publication lists several foliar insecticides that may be used to control BLH. It should be noted that most of the at-planting applied insecticides are not recommended to control BLH in potatoes because there is some evidence they do not provide adequate protection against the spread of BLTVA.

POTATO TUBERWORM: There were no potato tuberworm moths found in survey traps this week.

APHIDS: Potato growers (especially in the Lower Columbia Basin) should be checking their fields regularly for aphids. Right now, aphids are most likely to show up in fields that were not treated with a systemic insecticide at planting.