

INSECT MONITORING REPORT

Summarized Report for Sept. 16-22, 2010

POTATO TUBERWORM: Potato tuberworm (PTW) moths were found in six survey traps this week; one near Connell, one near Burbank, and four north of Pasco. These traps had 1-30 moths/trap. The moth population has been building in parts of the Southern Basin for many weeks. A graph showing the average PTW moth counts in the Columbia Basin this season has been added to this webpage (see below).

Recommendations: Potato growers in areas potentially impacted by these insects 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. The traps should be checked weekly. If you are finding moths in your traps, you know you may have a problem. If the moth counts increase from week to week, then chemical control measures prior to harvest may be warranted. Insecticide spray programs beginning 4 to 8 weeks before harvest have been successful in reducing PTW in potato tubers. For a list of products registered for control of PTW, visit the **2010 PNW Insect Management Handbook** online (Chapter: "Irish Potatoes", Section: "Tuberworm to Wireworm"). Cultural methods reported to reduce PTW damage include 1) eliminating cull piles and volunteers to reduce overwintering stages of PTW; 2) maintaining soil moisture after vine kill to prevent soil cracking (researchers have shown applying 0.1" of sprinkler irrigation daily from vine kill to harvest decreases PTW tuber damage without increasing fungal or bacterial diseases); 3) minimizing the time between desiccation and harvest (the longer tubers remain in the field after vine kill, the greater the likelihood of tuber infestation); and 4) maintaining more than 2" of soil over tubers during the season, and covering hills with 1-2" of soil after vine kill (tubers exposed or close to the surface are at high risk for PTW damage).

APHIDS: Aphids were found in 18 out of the 22 potato fields we sampled this week. Most were wingless green peach aphids. In fields where aphids were present, the counts ranged from 0.1 to 5.7 aphids/plant (average count was 1.0 aphids/plant). The aphid-virus threat for potatoes in the Columbia Basin is mostly over. The exception is with fields that are still green, actively growing, bulking, and not scheduled for harvest anytime soon. A graph showing the average aphid counts for this season has been added to this webpage (see below).

Recommendations: Early recognition and control of aphids is the best tactic in limiting the spread of potato leafroll virus (PLRV). This virus causes a tuber symptom called net necrosis in many cultivars that is unacceptable in processing potatoes. To minimize the spread of virus, university-based recommendations are to treat late-season storage potatoes as soon as non-winged aphids are detected. The low tolerance for net necrosis by processors and the high vectoring capacity of aphids, explains the very low treatment threshold for aphids in potato fields destined for storage and processing. Higher action thresholds may be appropriate for the few cultivars that do not develop net necrosis when infected with PLRV, and for potatoes that will not be stored. 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. Many foliar insecticides are labeled for the suppression of aphids in potatoes; for a list of products, visit the **2010 PNW Insect Management Handbook** online (Chapter: "Irish Potatoes", Section: "Aphids to Blister beetle"). Information can also be found in the **IPM Guidelines for Insects and Mites in ID, OR, and WA Potatoes**. When selecting an insecticide it is important to know the use restrictions (PHI, season limits, etc.), follow guidelines for insecticide resistance management, and consider the impact on natural enemies.

BEET LEAFHOPPERS: Beet leafhoppers (BLH) are still out and about, but they are probably not doing any damage to your potatoes this late into the growing season. The BLH counts have been quite low; averaging only 6.8 BLH/trap in Mattawa, 4.6 BLH/trap in the rest of the North Basin, and 0.5 BLH/trap in the South Basin.

Recommendations: Beet leafhoppers are important pests because they transmit BLTVA, a phytoplasma that causes purple top disease in potatoes. Most BLTVA infections occur early in the season, during May and June, and possibly in July. So, the time to control BLH in potatoes is over. It takes a while for purple top symptoms to develop. If your potatoes were infected with BLTVA you are probably seeing the symptoms of purple top now. Symptoms may include leaf curling with purple coloration, aerial tubers, chlorosis, and early senescence. Potato cultivars vary in susceptibility to purple top. Ranger, Umatilla, and Norkotah are considered highly susceptible; Russet Burbank is susceptible; and Alturas and Shepody are moderately susceptible.