

INSECT MONITORING REPORT

Summarized Report for Sept. 23-29, 2010

POTATO TUBERWORM: Potato tuberworm (PTW) moths were found in eleven survey traps this week (almost twice as many as the previous week); two near Othello, one near Connell, one near Burbank, two near Basin City, and five north of Pasco. These traps had 1-39 moths/trap. The traps nearest to Pasco had the most moths per trap. This is the first time this season that we have seen moths in our traps located near Othello, but the counts were very low (only 1 per trap). The moth population has been climbing in parts of the South Columbia 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: Most of the fields we have been sampling this season have been vine killed and/or harvested. Aphids were found in 2 out of the 3 potato fields we sampled this week. In the two fields where aphids were present, the counts ranged from 0.1 to 1.5 aphids/plant. The aphid-virus threat for potatoes in the Columbia Basin is over.