

CROP ALERT

June 15, 2017 Mike Stanyard & Jodi Letham, Regional Agronomists, Cornell Cooperative Extension

Potato Leafhoppers are Back!

Potato leafhoppers (PLH) have returned from their overwintering sites down south. They come up on storm fronts and get dropped out usually with the rain. We have been finding below threshold numbers of adults this last week across our NWNY region. Second cut regrowth and new seedings are the most vulnerable. PLH feed by piercing and sucking the plant sap from the plant. The resulting hopper burn (yellow leaves) and stunting means that we missed our opportunity for timely management.

PLH management is based of plant height and leafhoppers per sweep. Cornell recommends taking five sets of sweeps with a sweep net (10 sweeps per set) per field and calculating a PLH (adults & nymphs, see picture) per sweep for each set. The economic thresholds for PLH are listed below. Many NY growers are now utilizing PLH resistant alfalfa varieties to protect against quality and quantity losses. Many university researchers are recommending increasing PLH regular thresholds by 3X in resistant varieties. However, use regular threshold numbers (chart) for first year PLH resistant stands. After the first cut, use the 3X numbers.



PIH /Sween
0.2
0.5
1.0
2.0
> 2.0

Know Your Pest: Pea Aphid

Pea aphids continue to be found in high numbers when sweeping alfalfa. In most cases they are not of economic concern unless the alfalfa plant is stressed with additional insect injury, drought or compaction. I have heard of thresholds as high as one cup per 10 sweeps! I am more concerned about proper identification and that they are not misidentified as potato leafhoppers. Pea aphids are slow and pear-shapped with long black legs. This is in comparison to the quick wedge-shaped PLH whose legs are tucked in under its body. Aphids are also very green compared to the lime-green of PLH. Misidentification can be very costly with an unnecessary insecticide application!





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May 4, 2017 Mike Stanyard & Jodi Letham, Regional Agronomists, Cornell Cooperative Extension

Alfalfa Weevils Continue to be a Problem

Last week I was able to find alfalfa weevil cocoons (see picture) in the upper leaves of alfalfa that was going into dry hay. These fields were pretty beat up so I was glad to see the larval feeding stop. The larvae will go into the pupal stage and emerge as adults in 21 days. These weevils do not lay eggs but go on sort of a "summer vacation" from the alfalfa fields. They may come back into the alfalfa in early fall and lay eggs but those eggs rarely make it through the winter.

However, while sweeping for leafhoppers in some second cut fields this week, I noticed a lot of alfalfa weevil tip feeding. On closer inspection, these weevils were small and had quite a lot more feeding to do. On years when the weevil feeding is heavy in first cut, we always recommend that the second cut regrowth be watched closely. If you feel the alfalfa is standing still and not growing, you better take a closer look. Many of our alfalfa fields were cut late this year so cutting early will probably not be an option. Treatment threshold is 50% tip feeding. Randomly pick 50 stems and count the number with feeding damage. You do not have to actually look for the larvae. If 25 of those 50 stems are positive for damage, you are at 50% and a management decision needs to be made.





Armyworms on the Move!

I had my first call of armyworms moving across a road. There were lots of blackbirds cleaning them up out of the field and squished carcasses on the pavement. The armyworms were feeding in a rye field and had cleaned all the leaves off the grass in the ditch. These were mostly fully grown larvae and ready to pupate. As hay fields are beginning to be cut and winter grains start to mature, it is time to watch for armyworm movement. **Be particularly diligent of corn fields adjacent to these areas!!!**

Too Late to Plant Soybeans?

We are getting to the very end of planting season. When should we call it quits on soybeans? Cornell recommends June 20th as the last date for soybean planting. If you are going to push the limits this week, here are some suggestions.

- Plant an early group 2 maturity versus a group 1.
- Push up your plant populations 15 to 20 thousand per acre to compensate for fewer nodes on each plant.
- Plant on narrower rows to maximize sunlight interception and optimize potential yield.
- Start clean and spray weeds earlier than usual to eliminate as much stress as possible.

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