

# Soybean Planters Need To Look For Insects

WOOSTER, Ohio — Soybean growers may be looking to get their crop in the ground, but they especially need to keep in mind two insect pests this growing season.

The soybean aphid and bean leaf beetle are problematic for soybean growers and can cause economic losses either from feeding or through the transmission of viruses.

Ohio State University Extension specialists recommend that growers scout their fields for the presence of the insects as the growing season wears on and take appropriate management actions as deemed necessary.

The soybean aphid, the first known aphid to colonize soybeans, is a relatively new insect that has, in just two years' time, spread throughout the midwest region of the country. States that reported soybean aphid populations last year included Ohio, Michigan, Illinois, Minnesota, North Dakota, South Dakota,

Indiana, Kentucky, Iowa and Wisconsin. The insect has also been reported in Virginia, West Virginia, New York and Ontario, Canada.

Researchers know very little about the soybean aphid — what exactly is its overwintering host, whether or not it's a vector for disease, and why larger insect populations tend to be found in more northern states. But what they do know is that high insect populations can cause significant yield loss to the crop.

Ron Hammond, an Ohio State Extension entomologist with the Ohio Agricultural Research and Development Center, said some states reported an average six to eight bushel loss per acre last year due to soybean aphid feeding. "Some fields had as high as a 12 to 15 bushel loss per acre. There were reports in Ohio that indicated loss ranged from five to 10 bushels per acre. When you get into numbers like that,

that's considered an economic loss," he said.

Researchers in Ohio and other states speculate that yield losses are coming from the insect feeding, rather than from soybean mosaic virus that the insect is able to transmit.

The second insect growers should keep their eye on is the bean leaf beetle, a defoliator and pod feeder that is also a vector of bean pod mottle virus. The virus causes yield reduction in seed quality and yield, which is a problem for food-grade soybean

growers who have little luck is getting a premium price for "mottled" seed. One of the main symptoms of bean pod mottle virus is green-stem syndrome, where the plant stem remains green right up to harvest and pods are malformed.

"We are getting reports now that the bean leaf beetle is emerging, which may be of a concern for those growers who have already planted their soybeans," said Hammond. "With all the rain we've been having, planting has been very spotty

and in those areas with few soybean fields, they will act as trap crops and attract all the beetles in the area."

Hammond recommends that growers who already have their soybean crop in the ground to pay close attention to their fields for bean leaf beetle populations.

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(Continued from Page B14)

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