



Potato Progress

Research and Extension for Washington's Potato Industry
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Weekly Insect Survey—Potato Tuberworm and Beet Leafhopper

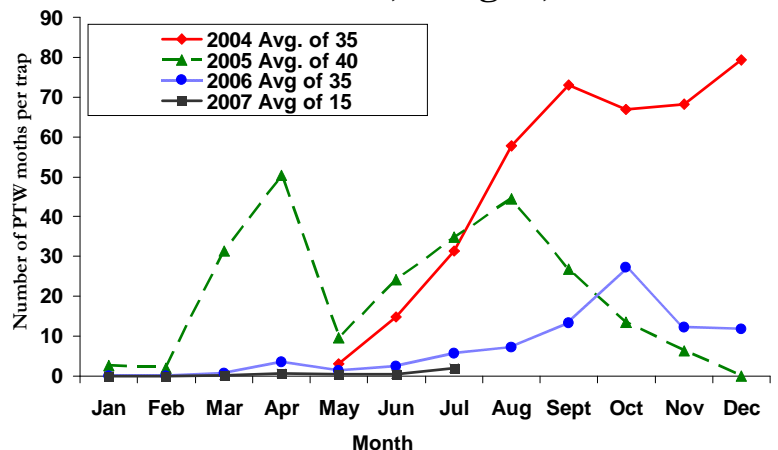
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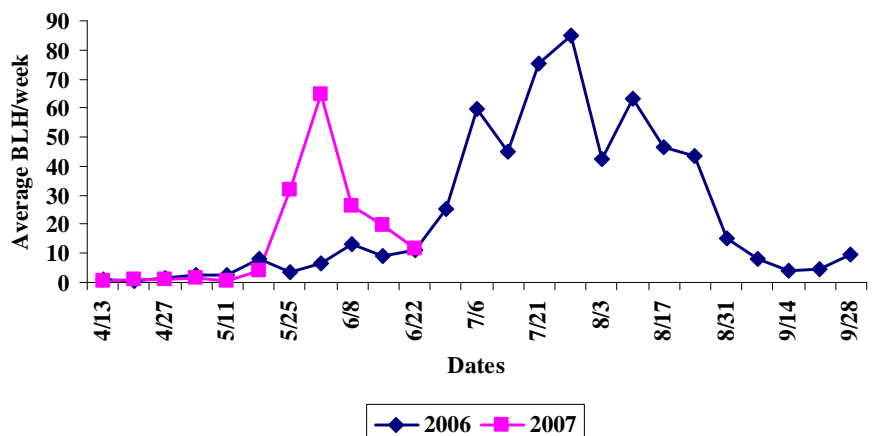
Potato tuberworm. Although in 2004 and 2005 high numbers of potato tuberworm (PTW) were found throughout the year, the 2006 and 2007 growing seasons have turned out to be different. PTW numbers have been substantially lower than counts from the previous two years in the Basin. In July 2007, so far, numbers are low but follow the same pattern as previous years. The severity of PTW damage in the 2007 season and the future will depend upon PTW ability to overwinter. Keep in mind that this pest is still present and well-established in the region. While numbers are low, localized populations may become high enough to cause damage. Pheromone traps should be placed near each potato field, at least a couple of weeks before kill-down, to confirm that insect numbers are low.

Beet Leafhoppers. The largest densities of beet leafhoppers (BLH) were observed during the month of July in 2006, and as early as mid to late May in 2007. BLH has been shown to be the major vector of BLTVA, which causes purple top. Early spring BLH populations are the most important populations to control to prevent early and extensive infection by BLTVA. The importance of later season infection is still unknown. Even with high insect numbers, overall incidence of BLTVA appears to be much lower this year. This may be due to timely insect control or

Population dynamics of the PTW, Columbia Basin, Oregon, 2004-07



Population dynamics of BLH, OR, 2006-07



possibly low incidence of infective leafhoppers. We are currently looking at this issue from leafhoppers collected from a number of locations over time from the lower Basin.

At this time it seems unlikely that either PTW or BLH are posing much of a threat to potato production in 2007, particularly in the lower Basin based on trap numbers. However, numbers of PTW, favored by high temperatures, suggest that numbers may be on the rise and that we should continue to scout. Stay tuned!

Tuberworm Damage in Washington, 2007

The 2007 crop has seen its first tuberworm damage. As noted recently on the potato commission's website and through its trapping network, tuberworm populations are building in the Tri-Cities area. **At least one field in this area has sustained economically important tuberworm damage this year.** All growers in the Washington and Oregon Columbia Basin are encouraged to have their own tuberworm pheromone traps near each of their fields.

The potato commission-supported tuberworm trapping network has to date not trapped any tuberworm moths north of Basin City, but a few traps south of Basin City are showing numbers over 10 per week. While these numbers are not extremely high, the building populations should still be a concern for all growers in the region. **Tuberworm does very well in hot weather**, and it may not take a lot of gravid females in a vine-killed field at the end of the season to cause difficulty in the marketplace. No matter where you are in the Columbia Basin, keep an eye out for tuberworm until your crop is safely harvested. For the latest trap catch data in map format see (updated mostly on Wednesday mornings):

<http://www.potatoes.com/research.cfm>

Topics for the Washington Potato Conference

The program committee for the Washington State Potato Conference is starting to develop a list of topics that might be covered during the February conference this winter. If there is anything you would particularly like to hear about, please contact Andy Jensen at the commission office, or Mark Pavek at WSU in Pullman (509-335-6861 or mjpavek@wsu.edu).