

Partnership Perk



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Soybean Aphids Reach Economic Threshold

Soybean aphid infestations have reached the economic threshold of 250 aphids per plant and with increasing populations in several Iowa counties. All soybean plots at on-farm sites in Jasper County have aphids present with several plots at or above the economic threshold. In research plots in Story County, soybean aphid populations have reached the economic threshold nearly a month earlier than the 2005—the most recent outbreak year. Several northeastern Iowa locations also have documented threshold populations during the past 10 days.

Cool temperatures, plants suffering drought stress and the absence of beneficial insects including lady beetles are three factors that favor an increase in soybean aphid populations. Although Iowa temperatures the week of July 16 have been in the mid-90°s, forecasts for the coming weekend are for daytime highs in the low-80°s, which are ideal temperatures for soybean aphids and could set the stage for rapid population increases.

Extension field agronomists in the western third of Iowa reported only scattered light populations as of July 16, but ISU entomologists advise regular scouting to keep ahead of developing populations as dry fields and cooler temperatures might trigger accelerated soybean aphid population growth.

Soybeans are at various stages of growth, with canopy closure occurring in early planted fields and much shorter plants in fields planted later. As the plant matures the aphids generally move lower with fewer at the very top. Therefore when you are scouting look through the entire plant not just the uppermost leaves.

Long Story Short: Soybean aphid populations in several fields from northeastern to central Iowa have now reached the economic threshold, and conditions are favorable in many areas for their populations to increase. In central Iowa, threshold levels have been reached a month earlier than in 2005. Scouting can provide sound management information as the season progresses. We will continue to update you on the soybean aphid population situation throughout the summer.

Source: Matt O'Neal, Carol Pilcher and Marlin Rice, Department of Entomology; Palle Pedersen, Department of Agronomy.