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August 2011

EMERGING PESTS!

As mentioned in an earlier newsletter, the Kudzu bug (a.k.a. bean plataspid, Megacopta cribraria Fabricus) has been confirmed in southern counties of NC. This imported pest feeds on legumes and thus may become a pest of soybeans and peanuts. When scouting soybeans, make sure you can properly identify this pest and report any findings to our office. (Images and more information can be found at http://www.nccrops.com/?p=61).

The Lesser cornstalk borer is becoming increasingly common in many of our soybean fields. Typically this pest has not been widespread and thus caused only minor economic damage. However higher than normal temperatures and low soil moisture tend to favor the likelihood of this pest. Damage of the pest may not be immediately evident since the boring or tunnels created often lie underneath the soybean bark just at the soil line. It is not uncommon to observe widely scattered plants dying or plants with stems that easily break at the soil level. Insecticide treatments made at this time of the year are ineffective since the pest, if still present, may be deep within the soil or within the plant stem. The best management that can be performed at this point is to record which fields are the most heavily infested. Researchers at NCSU are studying the problem. To date, research shows 1) that some soybean varieties are more tolerant of this pest; 2) damage is more severe in periods of drought; 3) incidence is often increased following a poor corn crop; and 4) sandier, droughty soils seem to be more prone to host this pest. This pest will also attack corn so preventative measures need to be taken for following corn crops. For more information, visit http://www.nccrops.com/?p=243

Southern stem rot has been found in tobacco in much of the state. While the disease is not new, it is significant because this disease also affects peanut and soybean crops. Thus, crop rotation to these crops does little to decrease disease incidence. Early symptoms in tobacco closely resemble black shank with wilting, yellowish leaves with decaying leaf margins or tips. Brown lesion may also be evident at the base of the plant stem along the soil line. Lesions on the stem typically have concentric rings with papery layers (fancy plant pathology words meaning that damage near the soil line may look like it can be peeled in layers). Some white mycelia (fungal growth) may be seen at the bottom of the lesion. Occasionally sclerotia (little red to orange reproductive bodies) are present. If you suspect you have this disease, please contact our office at 633-1477. We will soon post images of this disease taken by Dr. Mina Mila, NCSU Plant Pathology on our web page (http://craven.ces.ncsu.edu/).

SOYBEAN INSECT MANAGEMENT

At the time of writing, light trap catches across the state are widely variable with some areas catching 80-100 corn earworm moths per night and others only 1-2 per night. This is to be expected given the extremely low soil moisture in much of the state and widely scattered, variable rainfalls. The result of this type of moth flight is that 1) it is unlikely that we can predict when or if a flight will occur in an area and 2) scouting individual fields frequently is the only means to ensure protection against major insect damage. Scout fields and treat when economic thresholds are reached. To determine the threshold based upon row width, scouting method and soybean price, visit the NCSU Entomology website, http://www.ces.ncsu.edu/plymouth/ent/cewthresholdcalc.html.

Selection of insecticides and positive identification of existing caterpillar pests is critical. Over the past years our office has received many concerns of potential resistance of corn earworts to pyrethroids. Part of the problem is real, part is in error. Preliminary testing of the population in Virginia and North Carolina shows that as much as 20% of corn earworms population has developed resistance to pyrethroid materials. Thus, products other than pyrethroid materials are necessary. The other side of the story is that in some cases, growers mistakenly try to control soybean loopers, green cloverworms, fall armyworms or other caterpillar pest with pyrethroids. Pyrethroids will not control these particular caterpillars and should not be used. The bottom line is that if a pyrethroid is chosen, it is strongly advised to tank mix some other insecticide with it. Currently, Dr. Dominic Reisig, NCSU Extension Entomologist, suggests using Orthene. However, do not add Orthene (or other organophosphate materials) if herbicides have been applied within the last 2-3 weeks unless you are sure it is safe to do so. In some cases, organophosphate materials may adversely effect soybean yield if certain herbicides have been applied within the last 14 days. Given our late planting and replanting schedule, this may be the case for some soybeans. Better choices than this tank mix includes Steward, Belt, Tracer or Larvin.

PEANUT DISEASE & INSECT MANAGEMENT

The best and easiest means for disease management for peanuts is to follow the schedule recommended by the North Carolina State University Peanut Leaf Spot and Spray Advisory found at http://www.peanuts.ncsu.edu/. This applies custom management based upon your input, management, disease observations and local weather data.

If you are in an area where we’ve received “just enough” rain to get by, disease pressure is most likely low. Pathogens never really get a chance to take hold and build up numbers sufficient to cause a lot of disease losses. This can be particularly true with leaf spots. Of course, things can change for the worse very quickly. A little rain and humidity in August can initiate a leaf spot epidemic! Likewise, rain after a dry spell is thought to trigger stem rot outbreaks. If you are in a “just enough” situation, keep an eye on the weather (or better yet, leaf spot advisories) and be sure to maintain a good disease control program through early September in anticipation of digging later in the month.

Conversely if your fields are under drought stress, it is very important to avoid excess fungicide applications due to the risk of spider mite outbreaks. Hot, dry weather does not favor leaf spot development so fungicide application is not necessary. If fact, it more often causes greater harm than good.
Regardless of the situation, if you plan to delay harvest in hopes of getting some late-season rain, spray decisions can become difficult. Weather in September is unpredictable. In typical seasons, September has low rainfall, less humidity, and cooler nighttime temperatures. Thus conditions are less favorable for leaf spot by the mid-month. However, in the past few years, warm and humid weather has extended to the end of the month. These conditions are much more favorable for disease than in typical years. Under these conditions, fungicide programs need to continue until low humidity and nights in the 50’s finally begin to take hold. Because September weather can be so unpredictable, the best approach is to follow disease advisories to make fungicide application decisions on late harvested crops.

Corn earworms are the primary caterpillar pest in peanuts. As mentioned earlier, one of the concerns is that a small percentage of this pest has developed resistance to pyrethroid materials. Thus, the following guidelines have been developed by NCSU regarding the selection of insecticidal products. These guidelines are established based upon the concept that 100% control should not be an overriding goal when treating for caterpillars in peanuts and that some corn earworm resistance to pyrethroid materials is probable.

1. If the population of worms exceeds 8-10 per row foot, then the use of a non-pyrethroid insecticide might be a better choice.
2. If populations of tobacco budworm or fall armyworm make up more than 25% of the population, then the use of a non-pyrethroid insecticide might be a better choice.
3. If you understand that you do not need to obtain 100% control of caterpillars to preserve yield, then the use of a pyrethroid insecticide might be a better choice.
4. If spider mites are present, then Danitol or Brigade should be used for caterpillar control.

TOBACCO ROOT KNOT SURVEY

The Plant Pathology Department of NCSU and NCDA & CS frequently samples fields with root knot to determine the species and degree of infestation across the state. This year these folks are seeking samples from tobacco fields with root knot. If you have a field with root knot nematodes and would be willing to let us collect a sample, please contact me either at the office at 633-1477 or by email (mike_carroll@ncsu.edu). Thank you in advance for your assistance.

COTTON INSECT MANAGEMENT

With increased control of cotton bollworms through better Bt technology, it is easy to dismiss scouting for other pests simply based upon the probability that little damage will occur. However, this may result in excessive yield loss from secondary pest such as stinkbugs. While most growers understand that this pest can cause a great deal of damage if left untreated, many neglect scouting due to the greater amount of time required to scout. NCSU has worked with universities from across the cotton belt to develop a template with scouting tips, thresholds, and a boll guide to assist growers and scouts evaluate this pest. If you would like one of these free tools, please contact our office. (As a note, past surveys of cotton fields within Craven County conducted by the NCSU Entomology Department reveal a range of stinkbug damage as low as 3% and as high as almost 40%. The most economical management of stinkbugs is to scout and treat based upon the Dynamic Threshold. The most expensive action may be to do nothing.) For more information on scouting stinkbugs, the Dynamic Threshold, treatment options and other tips, visit the web site http://ipm.ncsu.edu/cotton/insectcorner/text.html#sb

Points to Ponder: Consider these points regarding technology. Whether you like it or hate it, it is a part of our society.

• Over 70% of the world’s population has a cell phone. It is estimated this number will reach 100% by 2015. Currently it is estimated that there are a bit over 500,000 applications available for these phone.
• Facebook has over 750 million members. Over 70% are outside of the US and 250 million of these utilize Facebook on mobile devices (represents over 60 countries).
• Of all the people that use the internet, 44% are from Asia and 23% in Europe. Only 13% are from the US.
• There are over 1 billion posts to Twitter per week.
• To date, individuals from 67 different countries have visited the Craven County Extension website. Approximately 300,000 visits viewed images, presentations, booklets or newsletters.

Think about these statements and ask yourself these questions: 1) “What will my business look like in 10 years?”  2) “How will I contact or communicate with buyers and clients?”

If we can be of any assistance, please contact our office at 633-1477

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