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Jennifer:

The following is my interim report for the project “**A sentinel plot program for detection of insect pests and diseases in Pennsylvania soybeans,**” which the Soybean Board generously funded this year.

This is the fourth year in a row that we have conducted this project, the goal of which is to track insect and disease pest populations in typical soybean fields around the state and share this information with growers.

Thirteen extension educators around PA are participating in this effort, tracking populations in 22 fields in 19 counties (three more counties than last year; Table 1). Eight of the educators are scouting fields themselves and reporting the data to me. For these educators, Soybean Board funds are paying for travel to sites and any supplies they needed. Six educators hired interns to handle scouting and reporting, so Soybean funds are paying the wages for these scouts and their mileage to fields.

Table 1. Penn State Extension Educators committed to scouting soybean fields.

County	Extension Educator	Number of fields to be scouted
Tioga	Craig Williams	2
Lebanon	Del Voight	2
Columbia, Northumberland, Union	Chris Houser	3
Sullivan	Mark Madden	1
Elk, McKean, Potter	Nicole Carutis	3
Lancaster	Jeff Graybill	2
York	John Rowehl	1
Schuylkill	Dwane Miller	1
Berks	Mena Hautau	2
Crawford	Joel Hunter	1
Montgomery	Andrew	1
	Frankenfield	

Franklin	Kelly Patches	1
Blair	Jessica Williamson	1
Mercer	Gary Micsky	1

Fields used in the project were established in May to mid June and scouting began upon emergence. We began reporting pest populations on 2 June and have made eight reports thus far, and will have made nine by the 1 August deadline for this report. We have reported our findings in the Field Crop News (<http://extension.psu.edu/field-crop-news>), which during the growing season is published online weekly and announced via an email list that reaches about 1200 agricultural professionals. We also posted the data on an entomology website (<http://ento.psu.edu/extension/field-crops/soybean-sentinel-plot-program>).

Thus far and as in past years, our scouting efforts have discovered a fairly narrow range of insects and only a few diseases, but importantly, none of the pest populations have yet exceeded economic thresholds, thus none of the fields so far have required pesticide treatments. This was also the case the last three years, and this is an important message for growers to hear: *pest populations are not pervasive and always threatening soybean yield*. In fact, in many locations and in most years, pest populations do not develop and thus pesticide use should provide no advantage.

To further market the findings of our project, we will discuss the results widely during the winter extension season. We will likely have at least 10 events across Pennsylvania through 2015 and early into 2016. With every opportunity, we will emphasize that the Pennsylvania Soybean Utilization Board funds our efforts. Notably, I have received inquiries from other states asking about the program, so there is wider interest beyond Pennsylvania and some of those states might end up establishing similar efforts.

Thank you very much for your generous support.

Best regards,



John Tooker

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