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Sentinel Plot Program Sounds Early Warning Signal for Soybean Pests

HARRISBURG, PA (June 28, 2012)— The Pennsylvania Soybean Board is funding a sentinel plot program to provide a valuable resource that the state’s soybean growers can consult to determine what pest populations are active around the state or in their region.

This summer, Penn State Extension will regularly scout fifteen typical soybean fields across the state, reporting significant populations of plant diseases and insect pests. These reports will be available to growers via Penn State’s weekly newsletter the *Field Crop News* (<http://extension.psu.edu/field-crop-news>) and on a Penn State website (<http://ento.psu.edu/extension/field-crops-new>).

“The objective of the program is to inform growers about what they may find active in their fields. The expectation is that growers will then be able to better direct the scouting efforts in their own fields,” says Penn State entomologist Dr. John Tooker. “We’ll also be scouting 30 or so additional fields in Lancaster and surrounding counties for brown marmorated stink bugs so we can keep soybean growers apprised of the risk from this invasive pest species.”

To manage threats to crop production, Extension personnel typically recommend an Integrated Pest Management program (IPM) that relies heavily on understanding local populations of pests to make informed, economical pest management decisions.

“Scouting is the cornerstone of Integrated Pest Management,” says Tooker. “For both insect pests and plant diseases, understanding local populations requires scouting fields regularly and assessing pest population sizes. That information can then be applied to economic thresholds to determine if it is in the grower’s best economic interest to apply a management tactic. Only by knowing the kind, number, and location of insect, weed, and disease damage can growers make informed decisions by weighing the amount of damage expected from a particular pest, the crop value, and the treatment cost.”

About the Pennsylvania Soybean Board

The [Pennsylvania Soybean Board](#) is a farmer-controlled Board responsible for managing Pennsylvania’s share of funds received from the nationwide Soybean Checkoff program. The funding is available under an assessment program, approved by Congress in 1990, under which soybean farmers contribute 50 cents of every \$100 they receive for their beans at the first point of sale. Funds are used to develop markets, educate consumers, and research new ways to utilize and produce soybeans more efficiently.

The efforts of the checkoff are directed by the United Soybean Board, composed of 69 volunteer farmer-leaders who are appointed to the national board by the U.S. Secretary of Agriculture.

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