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Abstract
Faculty and staff from Iowa State University (ISU) Extension, the ISU Department of Entomology, and the Iowa Soybean Association have formed the Iowa Soybean Aphid Task Force.

Disciplines
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Insects and Mites

Iowa State forms the aphid team and shares research results

by Jean McGuire, Extension Communications

Faculty and staff from Iowa State University (ISU) Extension, the ISU Department of Entomology, and the Iowa Soybean Association have formed the Iowa Soybean Aphid Task Force.

“The Task Force’s intent is to proactively plan soybean aphid management strategies. The Task Force is collecting and synthesizing the latest research information and preparing it for rapid delivery through the Web page, publications, and grower meetings,” says Jon Tollefson, the Task Force leader and chair of the Department of Entomology.

“Iowa soybean producers are the biggest beneficiaries of the work this team is doing,” said David Wright, Director of Production Technology, Iowa Soybean Association and Task Force member.

“Early observations of overwintering sites and early-planted soybean fields suggest aphid numbers could be very high this year,” he continues. “This team will ensure soybean producers are well informed of the presence of aphids and cost-effective management techniques through diligent statewide monitoring and constant communication with producers.”

If aphids do become a pest this season, producers may want to tank mix insecticides with postemergence herbicides to reduce the number of trips to the field. An ISU entomologist has done research in this area and says the practice has some drawbacks.

In 2004, Matt O’Neal, assistant professor of entomology, investigated how tank mixing insecticides with herbicides affects soybean aphid control. He did research on large colonies of soybean aphids often including white, shed skins and brownish carcasses killed by fungal pathogens. (Marlin E. Rice)
where plots with high aphid populations (more than 250 aphids per plant) were treated with insecticides either applied normally or through nozzles at pressures used for applying postemergence herbicides.

“Applying insecticides as one would a herbicide reduces the ability of the insecticide to kill aphids. By reducing the risk of herbicide drift, growers are not applying the insecticide with the coverage it requires. Our data from 2004 suggest that this reduced coverage allows aphids to survive after the insecticide has been applied.”

A more complete report on this research can be found at the Iowa Soybean Aphid Task Force Web address, www.soybeanaphid.info.

O’Neal is continuing the research in the 2005 crop season. ISU researchers are also working on other methods of managing soybean aphids. Those include:

- Determining the effectiveness of seed treatments on aphids
- Comparing the combination of organophosphate and carbamate tank mixes on soybean aphid management
- Using the natural enemies of soybean aphids to manage this insect.

The Task Force plans regular communication this summer to producers through ISU newsletters, the Web, and through the news media.

Jean McGuire is an extension communications specialist with responsibilities for agriculture and natural resources.

### Insects and Mites

#### Alfalfa weevil reported on alfalfa regrowth

by Carol Pilcher, Department of Entomology

Farmers should watch their fields after the first cutting for delayed or lack of green up due to activity of alfalfa weevils (both larvae and adults). Reports from northeastern and northwestern Iowa indicate that this pest is causing problems this year in alfalfa stubble. Heavy populations of weevil adults and surviving populations of larvae can delay new growth by feeding on the stubble and new buds as they break. This feeding may reduce yields and forage quality in the second and possibly third cuttings.

**What do alfalfa weevil larvae look like?** Alfalfa weevil larvae have a dark head that is almost black and are pale green with a white stripe down the back. The young larvae are about 1/16-inch long and may be light yellow in color. After feeding for several days, they turn green. They are 5/16-inch long when full grown.

**What do alfalfa weevil adults look like?** The adult weevils are light brown with a dark brown strip down the back that tapers to a narrow point. They are 1/4-inch long and have a narrow snout.

**How do I scout for larvae and adults in alfalfa stubble?** Start monitoring regrowth 4 to 5 days after the first cutting has been removed from the field. Check 20 1-square-foot areas in the field. Look for larvae and adults on the soil surface and around the alfalfa crowns.