Extension
University of Missouri

Harrison County Extension Center
1505 Main St., Courthouse Basement
Bethany, MO 64424

PHONE 660-425-6434
FAX 660-425-3772
EMAIL harrisonco@missouri.edu

New Pests Could Emerge in 2019

By Andy Luke, MU Extension Field Specialist in Agronomy

Like any New Year, 2019 will also come with new challenges. For farmers, these challenges may show up as pests new to Missouri for the first time in 2019. Now is a great time to learn about these pests so we are prepared when they show up during the growing season.

Growers should be on the lookout for a couple of diseases in corn that are likely to show up in Missouri in the near future. Bacterial Leaf Streak (BLS) is a disease that was first confirmed in the United States in Nebraska in 2016. Since then, BLS has spread to Colorado, Illinois, Iowa and Kansas. While it has never been confirmed in Missouri, many believe that the disease is likely present due to its close proximity across state lines. It closely resembles gray leaf spot, but can be differentiated by the wavy margins on the leaf lesions. It's important to tell the difference in these diseases, because BLS is not expected to be controlled with foliar fungicides.

Another disease to be on the lookout for is Tar Spot in corn. Tar Spot was first found in the U.S. in Illinois and Indiana in 2015 and can be identified as small, raised, black spots on both sides of the leaf surface. While its appearance is similar to common or southern rust, tar spot cannot be scraped off the leaf tissue with a fingernail like rust can. It is suspected that the disease is spread through wind and rainwater, so it is likely to spread quickly throughout the Corn Belt and may already be in Missouri. Because these two diseases are relatively new to the U.S., best management practices are still being developed.

In addition to diseases, insect pests may also show up in Missouri for the first time this year. Orange Gall Midge in soybeans is a relatively new pest, with injury first being reported in South Dakota in 2015. Appearing originally as small, white larvae, the gall midge turns bright red or orange as it matures. The larvae feed inside the stem, causing swelling and abnormal growth near the soil surface. The soybean plant will have dark brown markings on its stem, and will snap off easily near the ground, revealing the white or orange midge larvae. Most gall midge damage is noticed in soybean plants that are showing symptoms of damage or disease, with injury generally more severe along field edges. Because it is usually found in damaged fields, it is not known whether the orange gall midge causes significant damage or whether it is a secondary pest. Treatment with insecticides is not recommended because control is unlikely for the larvae that are protected while feeding inside the stem.

An additional insect that may soon show up in Missouri fields is the Spotted Lanternfly (SLF). This insect was first reported in the U.S. in Pennsylvania in 2014 and has slowly spread since then. Native to Asia, the Spotted Lanternfly will feed on corn, soybeans, fruits and ornamental trees. Extensive damage could also occur in grapes, the SLF's primary host. An adult SLF is gray with black spots on its forewing, with bright red and white underwings visible when its wings are spread.

If you notice any of these new pests in your fields in 2019, contact your local University of Missouri Extension office or call me, Andy Luke, at (660)-425-6434.

Written 1/11/19