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Jennifer:

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

This past year’s effort was the eight 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.

Fifteen extension educators around PA participated in this effort, tracking populations in 31 fields in 23 counties (Table 1), increases of 5 fields and 3 counties from our effort in 2018. Most of the educators scouted fields themselves and reported the data to me. For these educators, Soybean Board funds paid for travel to sites and any supplies they needed. Three educators hired interns to handle scouting and reporting, so Soybean funds paid the wages for these scouts and their mileage to fields. We had excess funds this year because two county educators did not hire interns in 2019, and problem we might face again in 2020 because of COVID-19.

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

County	Extension Educator	No. of fields
Armstrong	Rachel Milliron	2
Blair, Cambria, Somerset	Zach Larson	3
Bradford	Casey Guindon	2
Butler	Justin Brackenrich	2
Centre	Adriana Murillo-Williams	1
Centre, Northumberland, Union	Anna Busch	2
Crawford	Joel Hunter	1
Dauphin, Perry	Liz Bosak	3
Elk, McKean, Potter	Nicole Santangleo	3
Franklin	Brittany Clark	1
Lancaster	Jeff Graybill	2
Lebanon	Del Voight	3
Mercer	Claire Coombs	2
Montgomery	Andrew Frankenfield	1

Fields used in the project were established in late May to mid June and scouting began upon emergence. We began reporting pest populations on 11 June and have made the final report on 17 September, for a total of twelve reports. We reported our findings in the Field Crop News (<https://extension.psu.edu/forage-and-food-crops>), which during the growing season was published online weekly and announced via an email list that reaches more than 8,000 agricultural professionals.

For 2019, like past years, our scouting efforts discovered a fairly narrow range of insects and only a few diseases. And none of them grew high enough to need to be treated with insecticides or fungicides. As was the case for the seven previous years, and this is an important message for growers to hear: *pest populations are not pervasive and always threatening soybean yield*. In fact, as we found from 2012 - 2019, in many locations and in most years, pest populations do not develop and thus pesticide use should provide no advantage.

Thank you very much for your generous support.

Best regards,



John Tooker  
Professor & Extension Specialist