



June 22, 2007

## MANAGING POTATO LEAFHOPPERS IN ALFALFA

Potato leafhoppers have the potential to hurt alfalfa in Nebraska every year. This is generally a second and third cutting pest and has been common in Nebraska recently. Southerly winds bring this insect into Nebraska, as it does not overwinter here. We had those conditions earlier this year so area producers should watch out for this. The only way to know if potato leafhoppers are in your fields is to scout. Regrowth from first cutting will be susceptible to damage if leafhoppers set back in. They move temporarily out of a field and then typically move back in on regrowth.

These small (1/8 inch long), bright green, wedge shaped insects may cause severe damage to alfalfa by injecting a toxin into the plant as they feed. This feeding results in a distinctive yellow or purple triangle shape at the tip of the leaf. First year spring-planted alfalfa fields are particularly attractive to and vulnerable to potato leafhoppers, as are fields planted last year.

In older fields, these insects are usually a problem on second and third cuttings. Newly developed resistant varieties will protect from potato leafhoppers fairly well, but alfalfa in the seedling stage may still be damaged. All fields should still be scouted, as large numbers of.

### IRRIGATION MANAGEMENT

Next week, check out the information on irrigation management on our website at [saline.unl.edu](http://saline.unl.edu). There are three cooperators in Saline County that are using the mkhansen data loggers and watermark sensors for irrigation scheduling. The sensors read soil water tension. There is also an ET gage northwest of Wilber that gives local ET information on crop water use. This is useful information for area irrigators. For more information, give me a call at 821-2151 or email [rpryor1@unl.edu](mailto:rpryor1@unl.edu)

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