Pest Alert for the week ending 8-07-2015

In the Treasure Valley area Dr. Mike Thornton reports that they are primarily seeing white mold, bacterial stem rot and early blight. The crop is beginning to senescence in some fields, and growers should be carefully monitoring soil moisture to make sure they match water applications to crop use.

In the rest of southern and south eastern Idaho conditions remain favorable for late blight. With the current frequent rain showers and thunderstorms moving through the area and cooler night time temperatures growers should be very vigilant for late blight. In the past two weeks, Dr. Jeff Miller has reported that most of the late blight out breaks have been spread by the thunderstorms moving through the area. This is evident by the uniform levels of disease spread throughout infected fields instead of in isolated infection points or at the edge of fields spreading inwards.

In the past week, the University of Idaho has confirmed 4 more positive infections in Power county and two more in Bingham county but none in Minidoka county. To date, the late bight out breaks appear to be limited to these three counties. All isolates from these outbreaks have been identified as the US 23 genotype.

As we move towards harvest, growers affected by late blight need to be aggressive in managing the disease at the end of the season and going into storage. Growers should be aware that in addition to attacking foliage, late blight can infect tubers at any stage of development before and after harvest and in storage with symptoms and rot usually only showing up in storage. Late blight infection of tubers is characterized by irregularly shaped, slightly depressed brown to purplish areas on the skin. These symptoms may be less obvious on russet and red-skinned cultivars. A tan to reddish-brown, dry, granular rot is found under the skin in the discolored area, extending into the tuber usually less than half an inch. For more information and photos of late blight tuber symptoms see the attached link (http://bit.ly/1KWFt6a).

Late in the season it is advisable to avoid excessive irrigation as tubers become infected with late blight when spores wash down through the soil from infected leaves. Vines should also be killed at least two weeks before harvest, especially in blight infected fields. This interval minimizes the chance of tubers getting contaminated with late blight inoculum during harvest, and allows previously infected tubers to decompose in the field. If blight is present in the field or in the vicinity of the field at harvest, it may also be beneficial to spray foliage after vine killing with labeled fungicides to kill living late blight spores on the foliage.

For more detailed information on a late season checklist for managing late blight and fungicide fungicide recommendations see the attached link (http://bit.ly/1Kb3ELg)

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