

## Pest alert newsletter targets eastern Idaho pest concerns

### AT A GLANCE

Eastern Idaho fruit growing conditions are significantly different from other areas in Idaho. Local growers desire local information to help reduce pest pressures.

### The Situation

Apple is the most common tree fruit in eastern Idaho. Spring 2018 was the perfect storm for fire blight in Bonneville County. Comments from the Bonneville County Master Gardener Advisory Board and other local gardeners indicated that fire blight and codling moth are serious problems for backyard apple growers. The challenge for growers is that it is difficult to know when to spray for the pest issues they face.

### Our Response

After discussions with local constituents, the University of Idaho Extension horticulture educator in Bonneville County determined to provide regular pest alert information to residents. The objective was to educate growers about controlling fire blight and codling moth. As a result, pest alert information was developed and sent to growers via email.

In spring 2019, Bonneville County residents were encouraged to subscribe for pest alert notifications. Twelve notifications were emailed to subscribers that provided information related to timing and pesticide options for codling moth and fire blight in apples and pears.



Unchecked codling moth can destroy an apple crop. Photo: Whitney Cranshaw, Colorado State University, Bugwood.org.

In 2020, the area of coverage was expanded from Pocatello to Rigby. In addition, the pest alert notification was further developed in the form of a newsletter with expanded content that covered other pest issues, as well as beneficial insects. Thirty-four newsletters were emailed to a subscriber's list of over 170 people. Several University of Idaho Extension educators contributed articles to the newsletter.

### Program Outcomes

A survey was developed to identify if the newsletter was meeting the needs of the subscribers. Their responses are summarized as follows:

- In the categories of garden pest issues, codling moth, fire blight and use of pesticide, the readers

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indicated a significant increase of knowledge after receiving the Pest Alert Newsletter.

- 59% of respondents reported that a weekly newsletter was their preferred choice.
- 67% reported the information about pests other than codling moth and fire blight was very useful or extremely useful.
- 95% indicated the information was easy to read and follow.
- 59% indicated they changed timing of spray for codling moth based on their learning.
- 87% reported they rotated insecticides for codling moth control.
- 66% reported reduction in codling moth damage in 2020 compared to previous years.
- 44% indicated they reduced the amount of pesticide, compared to previous years.
- Respondents indicated they saved cost on pesticides by \$36/year.

- 67% indicated a reduction of fire blight in their trees, compared to previous years.

The Eastern Idaho Pest Alert Newsletter is helping gardeners and homeowners to be aware of and consider innovative approaches to control pests, particularly codling moth and fire blight in apples and pears. The feedback from pest alert recipients is positive and filled with gratitude.

### The Future

The Eastern Idaho Pest Alert Newsletter will be expanded to additional eastern Idaho counties as requested by county educators. The newsletter will include additional insect, weed and disease pests (other than codling moth and fire blight) and beneficial insects in each issue. To reduce the writing pressure on the Extension educator in Bonneville County, current, up-to-date factsheets from University of Idaho Extension and neighboring states will be referenced.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

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