

Soybean Aphid Facts

Over the past 15+ years we have been seen the Soybean Aphid become a real threat to our soybean production. As we enter into the peak season for aphid reproduction in soybeans it is important to remind our producers of some aphid strategies to economically control this pest.

1. **Scout your fields early and often.** Scout your fields from the R1 stage through the R4 growth stage. While border areas especially along tree lines tend to see higher numbers. Please do not ignore the interior parts of the field to make your judgement. Some signs to look for are below.
 - a. **Natural predation.** The signs of Asiatic Lady Beetles and Larvae are also signs of aphid populations. However, because they are much slower at reproduction they are often times too late to have much of an effect on controlling Aphids
 - b. **Ants.** Ants are attracted to aphids for the 'honeydew' secretions that aphids produce. The ants will actually defend the aphids from other natural predators.
2. **Aphid action numbers.** The "action" threshold is 250 aphids per plant on 80% of the field and rising. This number has been commonly recognized throughout the industry as the standard to initiate treatments to prevent economic injury. The actual number of aphids per plant that causes injury is greater than 675 aphids per plant.
3. **Treatment timing.** Early treatments are not recommended unless the numbers have reached the "action" threshold. In addition, timing with other products, like herbicides and fungicides, may cause applications that are either too early, or too late, for one of these products.
4. **Insecticide selection.** Depending upon the stage of development of the soybeans, severity of infestation, and weather conditions often determines the choice of insecticide to use. Recent research has encountered populations of aphids becoming resistant to certain insecticides, so be aware of the need to rotate modes of action to prevent resistance buildup.

Weather can also influence the decision to treat for Aphids. The past few years Aphid populations have been down in numbers. While the exact reason is unclear for the low numbers, the weather environment could be one reason as certain fungal diseases are known to kill aphids.

Weather can also influence the ability for ground rigs to apply insecticides, so the extra cost for aerial applications may need to be considered as well.