



November, 2008

WSU Extension Vegetable Seed Educator

Allow me to introduce myself... I am Carrie Wohleb, the new WSU Extension Educator for Vegetable and Vegetable Seed Crops for Grant/Adams Counties. I was hired in March 2008 to fill the position previously held by Mark Trent and Gary Pelter. I grew up in SE Idaho and Washington. In 2000, I graduated from Washington State University with M.S. and Ph.D. degrees in horticulture, where I focused on potato production and physiology under Drs. Bob Thornton and Larry Hiller. For the last eight years, I worked as an agronomist for a commercial potato farming operation in Nevada. I had many good experiences in Nevada, but it is great to be home again. I am now settled in Ephrata with my husband, John, and six-year-old son, Jake.

Vegetable seed crops are an important part of my new position, so I will be an active participant in the CBVSA. I am planning to revive the "Vegetable Seed Notes" to circulate information to CBVSA members about events, research, product registrations, organization activities, and other news that is important to our vegetable seed industry. Please contact me if you have information to include in the newsletter (your help is greatly appreciated). Jenelle Kerner (WSU Extension Secretary) and I will continue to work with the field representatives to organize the vegetable seed field isolation program for the Columbia Basin. With the approval of the CBVSFRA, we are looking into converting to an electronic pinning system. My experience with vegetable seed crops has been limited, but I am dedicated to learning more. This summer I spent time in carrot, turnip, pea, radish, and onion seed crops. I am looking forward to working on vegetable seed crops issues, and getting to know vegetable seed growers and field reps. Phone or e-mail me anytime at 509-754-2011 ext. 413 or cwohleb@wsu.edu.

Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program for Vegetable Seed Crops

USDA's Farm Service Agency's (FSA) Noninsured Crop Disaster Assistance Program (NAP) provides financial assistance to producers of noninsurable crops when low yields, loss of inventory, or prevented planting occurs due to natural disasters. NAP assistance is now available to growers of vegetable seed crops. This is catastrophic coverage for natural disasters that reduce the expected unit production of the crop by more than 50%, or prevent the producer from planting more than 35% of the intended crop acreage. The service fee to enroll is \$250 per crop, or \$700 per producer per administrative county. Application for coverage of 2009 vegetable seed crops (including onion, carrot, turnip, radish, and others) is due on 12/1/08. Application for coverage of spring-seeded vegetable seed crops (including coriander and others) is due on 3/15/09. Contact the local FSA office for more information.

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WSU and PNW Beekeepers Study Honey Bee Colony Health

Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD) is the name given to a syndrome characterized by the sudden disappearance of adult honey bees in a hive while immature bees (and often the queen) and plenty of honey remain. CCD has been reported across the U.S. and in many countries around the world. The cause of CCD is unknown, but most researchers believe that it results from a combination of factors or stresses, as opposed to a single discrete cause. Four broad classes of potential culprits are being looked into: pathogens, parasites, environmental stresses (including pesticides), and management stresses (including nutrition problems, and transportation-related stress).

The Washington State Beekeepers Association estimates statewide losses to CCD at between 35 and 50 percent in recent years. Eric Olson, owner of a migratory beekeeping operation in Yakima, says he lost 4,000 hives worth approximately \$1.2 million last spring. These reports have a lot of people in the PNW concerned, so WSU scientists and PNW beekeepers have joined forces to study potential causes of CCD. A program has been underway since January to survey honey bee health in hives across Washington. Honey bee colonies from migratory and stationary beekeeping operations are being sampled every 30 days and evaluated in a WSU laboratory. Parasites (tracheal and varroa mites) and pathogens (*Nosema apis* and *Nosema ceranae*) are of primary interest. The varroa mite parasitizes honey bees and transmits bee viruses; it may have a role in CCD. *Nosema* species are pathogenic microsporidian that destroy the functional capacity of the intestinal lining of bees and shortens their lives; these pathogens are likely culprits in CCD, especially *N. ceranae*. *Nosema apis* has afflicted bees in the U.S. for many years, but *Nosema ceranae* is a newer problem in the U.S. and is known to be responsible for widespread colony losses in Spain. One of the objectives of the honey bee survey in Washington is to determine if *N. ceranae* is present; differentiating between the two species of *Nosema* is not simple and requires molecular analysis. This survey, a repeated sampling and analysis of honey bees, will allow researchers to track seasonal variability in parasitic mite infestation and pathogen loads and relate them to colony health measures. The expectation is that the results of the survey will provide information of immediate use to the beekeeping industry in making management decisions to protect honey bee colonies.

The WSU Agricultural Research Center dedicated funds this year to support staff and lab operations for honey bee colony health research. Two private beekeepers, Eric Olson of Yakima and Tom Hamilton of Nampa, donated seed money to get the WSU lab up and running. Noyes Apiaries, the Idaho Honey Association, and the Washington State Beekeepers Registration Fund have also made contributions. This summer, an emergency request was put forward to the Washington State Commission on Pesticide Registration (WSCP) by Dr. Walter (Steve) Sheppard, WSU Department of Entomology, to request their support for honey bee colony health research. I attended this meeting and learned that the WSCP will contribute to the project. Many WSCP Board Members, however, were disappointed that groups representing crops dependent on honey bee pollinators have not donated funds to support the project.

2009 CBVSA Annual Conference

Mark your calendars... The 2009 CBVSA Annual Conference will be January 15th at the Best Western Hallmark Inn, Moses Lake.

Sincerely,

Carrie H. Wohleb
Area Extension Educator – Vegetable and Vegetable Seed Crops

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