

Ohio State University Extension – Wayne County IPM Internship

Thomas Becker

Background

- ❖ This past summer, I worked as an intern for Ohio State University Extension in Wayne County. Specifically, I worked within the Ag. and Natural Resources department as a crop scout for the Integrated Pest Management program.

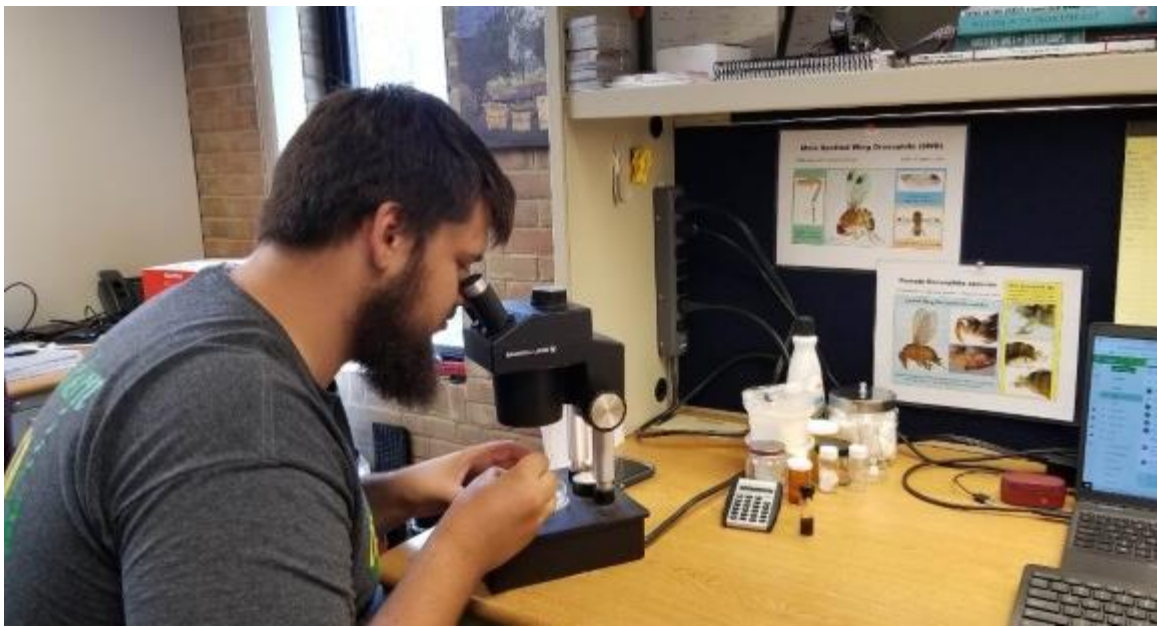


Putting bucket traps together to hang in an apple orchard. These helped us monitor Codling Moth populations.

Mission

- ❖ The role of the IPM program in protecting Ohio's local food systems, establishing environmentally and economically sustainable decision-making tools, and providing an environment conducive for education is based in frontline work with stakeholders to help them make educated and effective pest management decisions using IPM methods and strategies.

Counting fruit flies called Spotted Wing Drosophila that we trapped in small fruit crops.



The IPM Program

- ❖ Integrated Pest Management (IPM) is a method of pest management that utilizes multiple approaches to pest control. These approaches include:
 - ❖ Cultural control
 - ❖ Physical/Mechanical Control
 - ❖ Biological control
 - ❖ Chemical Control
- ❖ More specifically, the IPM program in Wayne County employs crop scouts to monitor crops throughout the area. Scouts are looking for insect pests, diseases, and weeds as well as any damage caused by those pests. Scouts compare their findings to a predetermined economic injury level (EIL), or economic threshold, to determine if a pest management action is required.

Finding The Position

- ❖ I was already aware of the IPM program before I applied because I have family members that have worked in extension. I was made aware that they were going to be hiring crop scouts for the summer. Once they posted the position on Facebook, I applied right away.



Pumpkin Field



Setting a moth trap in sweet corn.



Sweeping alfalfa for Potato Leaf Hopper.



A sunflower field grown for organic sunflower oil production.

This was one of the Amish produce farms that I scouted on.



Here, I am entering Wayne County trap count data into an Excel spreadsheet.



On The Job

- ❖ My main responsibilities for this experience revolved around being out on the farms. I scouted a variety of crops including:
 - ❖ Fruits
 - ❖ Vegetables
 - ❖ Field corn
 - ❖ Soybeans
 - ❖ Sunflowers
 - ❖ Alfalfa hay
- ❖ At each location, I would measure and stage each crop, scout for signs of pests and disease, check insect traps, and write up a report to give to each farmer. At the end of each week, I would compile trap information and put that data on a statewide spreadsheet. I would also summarize our weekly scouting notes which got sent out to our farmers each week.

Accomplishments

Events

- ❖ There were several events throughout the summer that our county's IPM group were invited to. There are two area produce auctions that hosted crop walks and grower's meetings. I got the opportunity to give IPM updates and answer questions at these events.
- ❖ I also got the opportunity to represent the extension office and our IPM program at the Twilight Dairy Tour that Wayne County extension hosts along with the Wayne-Ashland Dairy Service Unit.

Appreciation For The Ag. Industry

- ❖ Throughout this experience, I gained a tremendous amount of respect and appreciation for the ag. Industry in Ohio, and specifically within Wayne County. This experience showed me how diverse agriculture is in our area and how it can provide not only for the producers, but for whole communities.

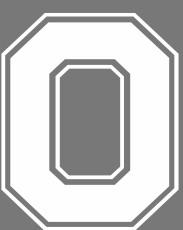
A Squash Vine Borer I found on the inside of a pumpkin stem.



A crop walk hosted by an Amish produce grower.

Reflection

- ❖ I was looking for an experience where I could work right alongside farmers, and that is exactly what this internship provided. That is what I'd like to continue doing in the future. I plan to work with the Wayne county IPM program again next summer while I job search for something similar, but more long-term. For students that want a very hands-on experience working closely with industry professionals, this is the internship for you.



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