CROP NOTES for July 25, 2018 – Insect Update
Iowa State University Extension Information for Northeast Iowa
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INSECT UPDATE – on Spotty Insect Pests
Second Generation True Armyworm
Bird Cherry-Oat Aphid in Corn

Second Generation True Armyworm
Northeast Iowa has had a few reports on severe damage in corn from 2nd generation True armyworm. This rarely happens, but it has in 2018. If you manage a basic level of crop scouting on a weekly basis, this is one insect pest that is easy to respond to before too much damage is done. However, if ignored, it only takes a couple of weeks for a field to look like this one.

True armyworm larvae keep feeding until they get about 1.5 inches long when they stop feeding to pupate, then become a moth to lay eggs for another generation. These caterpillars are well known to move in large numbers to feed mostly on grass species. In late season corn, consider treatment if finding leaves above the ear being fed on with multiple larvae per plant, and larvae are 1-inch long or smaller. Again, they stop feeding at about 1.5 inches long. If treating a field border to protect from armyworms invading from an adjacent field, a 20- to 40-foot border should be sufficient. Because the larvae are active at night, apply treatments late in the day. In soybeans and alfalfa, they usually migrate through these fields to get to another grass area rather than feed heavily on these crops. They will feed enough to survive, but priority is to get to grass.

Bird Cherry-Oat Aphid in Corn
In my July 23 Crop Notes I asked to be notified of any Bird Cherry-Oat Aphid activity in corn, and I promptly received a text message of light activity in a field in Chickasaw County. This is ahead of the normal calendar of activity we have seen in the past, but not surprising with the very warm crop season. Since these aphids strongly favor just some hybrids over most others, we believe a rough threshold to be >500 aphids per plant average and moving up to the husk. To review more information about Bird Cherry-Oat Aphid, please refer to the July 23 Crop Notes.
Aphids first appear in the lower canopy and then move up the plant. First photo from 2011 near Protivin with aphids at the base of the plant, and second photo one week later with aphids on the husk and clearly >500/plant.

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