Spotted Lanternfly (SLF) Potential Damage to the Pennsylvania (PA) Craft Beer Industry

The spotted lanternfly was accidentally introduced to the United States in 2012, thought to be transported in a shipment of stone. The first infestation was discovered in 2014 in Berks County, PA.

The swarming nature of the insect caused concern, and researchers found that the lanternfly feeds on over 70 different types of plants, including many valuable PA crops such as fruit trees, grapes, hops, barley, and maple trees.

PA is the largest producer of barley in the Northeast region. (Gruber, 2017.)

In 2018, Governor Tom Wolf introduced $791,000 in grants to grow the state’s local beer industry, including funds for farmers to grow hops for local use (PLCR, 2018).

As of October 29, 2020, there are additional SLF infestations in eight NJ counties adjacent to PA, two counties each in MD and VA, and in one county each in DE, WV, OH, and CT. There are additional sightings in 17 counties in NY. Sightings have been found as far north as MA and as far south as NC (NY IPM, 2020).

In 2020, the number of infestations increased by nearly 500 percent (Schneck, 2020).

GIS Analysis

Some of the largest hops and barley crop acreages are located in the same areas where SLF infestations are present. Other large crop acreages are within the likely path of the SLF’s future spread.

Counties with the greatest concentrations of breweries also have infestations present.

No major reports have been made about the actual damage done to these and other crops. The effects may be gradual as the lanternfly continues its spread.

References


