

## New Foe for Area Soybean Farmers

Farmers are accustomed to challenges and hardships as they produce food and fiber for our country and the world. Damaging insects, diseases and climate extremes and the economy often seem to be working against our farmers.

Well, if we didn't have enough concerns, Northeast Georgia is the new home of the Bean Plataspid. In early fall of 2009, extension agents were alerted to the existence of the foreign bug from India and China where it feeds on kudzu, soybeans and other closely related legumes. Some were detected last year in Morgan County. However, in the last two weeks, the Bean Plataspid has been found in large numbers in soybean fields in Northeast Georgia including Franklin County. This insect also called a lablab bug, and related to stink bugs, was first noticed last fall aggregating on homes (like our friend the ladybug) and feeding on kudzu.

Entomologists with the University of Georgia Extension have been busy searching literature for information on management and control as well as conducting trials to determine insecticides which are most active on this pest.

Early sightings found this pest nourishing in large numbers on the stems of soybeans that are in the vegetative or early bloom stage of growth. The good news, in talking with Dr. Phillip Roberts, is that the soybean plants at this time don't seem to be economically damaged. It will be important for farmers to monitor fields closely, especially as pods begin to form. If feeding occurs on blooms or pods, treat with insecticides based on available information. Early, limited observations suggest that pyrethroids and Lorsban have activity on the Bean Plataspid. One of the biggest problems now is just lack of information. Entomologists are striving to determine what threshold levels are before producers should spray.

Homeowners are not off the hook. Like the Asian Ladybug, this pest will congregate on house siding and be searching for entrances. These bugs also will be able to enter through the tiniest of cracks. The difference for homeowners is that, unlike lady bugs, the Bean Plataspid, being related to stink bugs, have quite the pungent odor when disturbed.

Extension entomologists and county agents throughout the area will monitor this new pest closely to gather more information and determine the optimum control measures.

## MASTER GOAT FARMER CERTIFICATION TRAINING

A six-week comprehensive program for goat producers will begin August 3 and continue each Tuesday for six weeks ending September 7. The program is limited to the first 75 applicants and all meetings will be held at the UGA Livestock Instructional Arena in Athens. Each session will run from 6:30 to 8:30 pm. The cost is \$75 which includes study materials, proceedings, meals, refreshments, door prizes, cap and graduation certificate. Topics that will be covered include Nutrition, Body Condition, Scoring, Selection, Breeds, Reproduction and Kidding, Health and Diseases, Pasture Management, Goat Handling Facilities and Fencing, Parasitology, FAMACJHA Training, Business and Marketing.

Those interested in attending should call the Franklin County Extension Office at 706 384-2843. This meeting is sponsored by The University of Georgia Cooperative Extension in Franklin, Banks, Elbert, Habersham, Jackson, Madison and Stephens Counties.