BILL: And good morning and welcome into our Thursday edition of Ag Talk. This is Bill Rice along with Ed Lentz and today, Ed we are talking about these pesky Potato Leafhoppers.

ED: We do get leafhoppers on potatoes but is it also the same leafhopper that can affect alfalfa. Potato leafhoppers can cause a lot of damage. The way things are they are little vampires and they will get on the alfalfa leaflet and they will put their little sucking tool and there and pull out the juices but when they do that they will also put in a toxin and we get hopper burn which makes the little leaflets turn yellow and we get less nutrition. And also, they will stunt the plant. So we can get a yield loss of definitely a quality loss when we have potato leafhopper damage. We know they are in the area now. They move in when we have storms from the south bring them up. They came in early this year and the challenge we got this time since we been dry, the alfalfa is growing slow which means the hopper can do a lot more damage than it would other years. So we need a sample out there we usually say sample for leafhoppers when the alfalfa is about six inches tall and you’re going to need a sweep net and that’s nothing but a glorified butterfly net. When we go out in the field we need to do in an area we do ten sweeps where we vigorously take our arm and sweep that net across an area. We want to go in three to five different areas in that field and take ten sweeps in each one of those areas. And then we’re going to take the average of what we have in each of those areas what our potato leafhopper is to see what the field number is. And generally the rule of thumb is the average number of potato leafhoppers you have equals the height of alfalfa that you should spray that is what your threshold is. What we mean by threshold is when it’s going to pay to have it sprayed. So for example, if your alfalfa is eight inches tall, you have an average of eight leafhoppers, you need to spray. Now, if we have out there what we call resistant alfalfa to potato leafhopper we can increase that threshold by three so if it was a threshold of eight for eight inches we would say it would need to be 24. But we have nothing that is just totally resistant. And the other thing that we remind people, if you plant a resistant alfalfa variety to potato leafhopper, the first year planting you want to treat it as if it’s not potato leafhopper resistant just to give it some protection and some buffer with that new stand on there. We also recommend when you do scouting on the fields do it on a dry and calm day because these leafhoppers will be moving and it’s harder to get their net working and so it’s pretty easy to sweep on a dry and calm day. But they’re out there leafhoppers so be looking for them in your alfalfa and be ready to spray.

BILL: Thank you Ed. For Ag Talk this is Bill Rice along with Ed Lentz. Good morning to you.

Ed: Good morning.