Introduction:

This Summer I began my full time employment with G.S. Long, a chemical company based in Union Gap, WA which also offers crop consulting services for a wide variety of crops. G.S Long originally began in 1980 and has been family owned and operated since. The company service areas stretch from Wenatchee, WA to Hood River, OR providing top quality crop protection, nutritional inputs, product delivery, and crop consulting.

My First Season:

To begin my career at G.S. Long I was assigned to scout hop yards for a crop consultant whose main clients are located in the Yakima valley. The responsibilities of a field scout are to enter a field, identify what kinds of pests and diseases are present, quantify those pests and diseases, write a small report on each field, and finally present the information to the crop consultant and the growers so that they can form an effective integrated pest management plan for the coming week. We visit twelve growers each week and each grower once a week in total covering 7,200 acres of hops from Moxee, WA to Prosser, WA. The most common insects that we deal with are aphid (Fig. 1), two spot spider mite (Fig. 2), Lepidoptera larvae (Fig. 3), Stethorus, and typhlodromus mites. Not all of which are pests. Stethorus (Steth) and typhlodromus (typh) are both predatory species which feed on two spot spider mites. The diseases that we most commonly face include powdery mildew (Fig. 4), downy mildew (Fig. 5), and viruses.

My introduction into the crop consulting and by extension the agricultural chemical industry began with being able to identify and quantify these pests and diseases so that I could begin to learn how to control them in an effective, economically viable, and environmentally safe way. While I still have a mountain of information to learn about the actual integrated pest management portion, this was a good way to introduce me to how the industry works and gain a basic understanding of common farming and IPM practices for hops grown in the Yakima valley.

Summary:

Overall I have thoroughly enjoyed my first season with G.S. Long I have learned a lot, but more importantly I have learned what topics I need to study and educate myself on for the future. It was a great way to start out what will hopefully be a long and successful career as a crop consultant with this company.