Background

- Michigan State University
- University of Texas - Tyler
- Early Career in Oklahoma
- Currently work with potatoes in Michigan
  - Approx. 45,000 acres statewide
  - ABC, Inc. looks at about 1/3 of the acres
Topics of Discussion

• Consultants Role and ABC, Inc. Services
• 33 year-old Business in Transition
• Insects, Late Blight and resistance
Agri-Business Consultants, Inc.

- Incorporated in 1983 to Bring Science and Service to Michigan Agriculture
- Our Primary Mission is to Provide Integrated Agronomic and Pest Management Services to our clients
- We are Applied Ecologists, We help Our Clients Make Resource Management Decisions
- We sell our Clients on Making Us Part of their Management Team
Services Overview

- Improve yields, increase client profitability and protect the environment
- Provide IPM advice and solutions
- Crops: Primarily Potatoes.
  - Corn, wheat, soybeans and cover crops
- Weekly potato scouting and recommendations during growing season
- Soil Sampling – fertility and nematodes
A Unique Service

• Potatoes in Michigan require weekly assessment (at least)
• Clients have a unique need for our advice
  • Make disease risk predictions – multiple factors
    • While carefully prioritizing our time
  • Effectiveness of pesticides, Nitrogen Leaching
  • Understanding different varieties and tolerance to pests
  • Soil Health, Environmental Concerns around pesticide and fertilizer use
Business Transition

• Young consultant in a long established business
  • Much different than leaving a career to build a new business
• We are in a transitionary period
  • Rebuilding Staff
    • Lost 2 consultants in last couple of years only replaced one so far
  • Need to Replace two Owners in next 3-? years
Hiring Team Members

- Isn’t the right job for a lot of people
  - Independent learner and mentoring from longer term consultants
- Need to bring the right people on board
- Consultant Training Models
  - A: B.S., Scout, earn a Master’s degree while Consultant Trainees
  - B: M.S., Scout and Consultant Training
  - C: B.S., Scout and Consultant Training
Colorado Potato Beetle Challenges

• Significant pressure from nearby field
• Temik solution until 1990
  • Resistance issues 1988
  • Major increase from $60/acre to $250/acre for many fields
• Seed treatments every acre, foliar as needed
• 1995 Neonics came on for use
• Current threats to using Neonics
Late Blight

- **Genotypes** are more aggressive now over a wider range of conditions vs. pre 1993
- Stem lesions more common now than before
  - Used to be leaves would fall off and less spreading occurred
- **Ridomil resistance** (mefenoxam or metalaxyl)
  - Ridomil used to really suppress Late Blight
  - If the LB type is US8 it is resistant to Ridomil US23 sensitive US22 intermediate