

LATE SEASON CORN AND SOYBEAN DISEASES



1824 N St, Ste 102 • Auburn NE 68305
402-274-4755 • www.nemaha.unl.edu

Last week I discussed some late season insect pests that sometimes can impact soybean yields. We have had a significant amount of rain over the area the past couple of weeks. This should provide sufficient moisture for corn and soybeans to have good to excellent yields this year. Corn and soybeans can still be impacted by late season diseases, especially if factors exist that favor development of diseases. Positive identification of the disease is also important, i.e. Goss's wilt, Southern corn leaf rust and Gray Leaf Spot in corn or Septoria Brown Spot, Bacterial Blight and Frogeye in soybeans. Under certain conditions the use of fungicides can definitely be insurance against some diseases, especially under circumstances where disease development is more favorable. Fungicides can also be a management tool to improve plant health and reduce lodging under adverse weather conditions, which could reduce down corn and potentially increase harvestable corn yields. If you have some late planted corn, it may fall into this category. In all crops, environmental factors, cultural practices, such as variety, planting date and irrigation may influence the incidence of disease infection. In some years, conditions have been favorable for disease development, such as Gray Leaf Spot, and application of fungicides provided significant yield responses in a number of University trials. In other years, environmental conditions were less favorable for disease development, and fungicides had less of an impact on corn yields.

Should corn be sprayed with fungicides this late in the season? One thing is certain with fungicide applications; any response has been variable and not consistent across all fields and crops. Fields which are more subject to development of foliar diseases include: fields that have sprinkler irrigation, protected fields that have little air circulation and bottom fields that are subject to heavy dews. These fields will generally also be higher yielding, so a fungicide application may be beneficial. The problem is you cannot predict a disease problem or environmental conditions that will determine if you will get a yield response from a fungicide application. For corn the best strategy is: apply a fungicide only when warranted, use IPM and scout fields, use recommended fungicide rates and mix or alternate fungicides with different modes of action.

What about fungicides for soybeans? Most soybeans in the area are not mature yet, so may be still impacted by diseases. Under certain conditions the use of fungicides can definitely be insurance against some diseases, especially under circumstances where disease development is more favorable. Similar to corn, fungicides can also be a management tool to improve plant health and reduce lodging under adverse weather conditions. Environmental factors, cultural practices, such as variety, planting date and irrigation may influence the incidence of disease infection. In some years, conditions have been favorable for disease development and application of fungicides provided significant yield responses in University trials. In other years, environmental conditions were less favorable for disease development, and fungicides had less of an impact on soybean yields. If you are considering making a fungicide application in response to diseases in soybeans, there are several points to consider before making your final decision: 1) weather, 2) yield impact, 3) window of protection, 4) input costs and 5) late season disease pressure.

Gary Lesoing
Extension Educator
Nemaha County
August 2016