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BRING IN SOYBEAN CYST SAMPLES

Soybean cyst nematodes often go unnoticed in farmers' fields. However, the microscopic worm that attacks soybean plant roots can reduce yields by 5 to 10 bushels per acre or more. Testing and awareness are the keys to combat this pest.

At the Soybean Management Field Days this year near Dorchester, over 125 farmers were given sample bags to test for soybean cyst nematode in farm fields. During or after harvest is the perfect time to send in a sample. I am currently collecting samples and will save you postage on any samples dropped off at the Extension office this fall.

Soybean cyst nematode infestations have steadily increased in Nebraska since they were first detected in Richardson County in 1986. Although most infestations reduce yields by five to ten bushels per acre, there have been yield losses of 20 bushels and some farmers have indicated up to 100 percent losses in parts of their fields. If you notice areas in a field where soybean yields are lower, and it can't be explained by weather, soil type, flooding, insect infestations or weed pressure, then there's a good chance it's soybean cyst nematode. Often there are no above-ground symptoms, just lower yields than what would be expected. There have been documented yield reductions of 25 to 30 percent with no visible above-ground signs.

It is important in Saline County that we get a wider spread sampling done in our County. Nematodes have been found in the Southeast part of the county. The Nebraska Soybean Board provided growers with free sampling kits valued at \$20.00. If you did not receive a sample bag, I have some at the Extension office.

Last year, 300 samples were tested in Nebraska and 24 percent tested positive for soybean cyst nematodes. One of the most significant findings from the tests was that the nematodes have spread to six more counties. Adams, Butler, Colfax, Lancaster, Seward and Valley counties joined 27 other Nebraska counties in the eastern half of the state where the pest has been found earlier. Soybean cyst nematodes showed up as far west as Buffalo County in 2004.

Samples can be taken any time during the year, but following harvest is an optimal sampling time, especially in areas where lower yields can't be explained. The deadline written on the 2006 samples bags, if you send in yourself, is January 1, 2007.

There are two main ways to control this pest. Crop rotation with non-host crops, such as corn, sorghum, small grains and alfalfa, and planting resistant soybean varieties. Rotating soybean varieties is also very important. Resistant soybean varieties do not cost any more than susceptible varieties because there are no technology fees associated with them.

So bring those sample bags in this fall by December 1st to the office of UNL Extension in Saline County, 306 West 3rd, Wilber. That will save you postage. You may borrow a soil probe from my office or use slices from a tile spade to sample. Instructions for how to sample correctly are in the bag for your reference. I hope your field comes up negative, but if it comes up positive, that is



very important management to know.

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