

Partnership Perk



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Soybean cyst nematode females now apparent on roots in Iowa

We are into the second month of the growing season and as expected, soybean pests and pathogens are beginning to show up. The soybean cyst nematode (SCN) occurs in up to 75% of Iowa fields, but many growers may not know that their fields are infested with the pest. Fields can be checked for SCN by digging roots, shaking off soil, and looking for the adult SCN females, which appear as small white dots on the roots. Also, the performance of SCN-resistant soybeans can be checked by observing roots for SCN females. Resistance may be failing if many SCN females are seen on roots of resistant soybean varieties.

Last Thursday, June 14, 2007, ISU Extension field agronomist John Holmes observed adult SCN females on soybeans in Hamilton County, near Webster City. The females were observed on roots of plants growing in spots where the soil pH was high. The beans were planted in early May.

SCN females should be apparent on young roots of soybean plants through July and August. Roots should be checked no earlier than 4 or 5 weeks after planting. SCN may not cause obvious above-ground symptoms, so checking roots is an effective yet inexpensive way to scout for the pest.

Long story short: Soybean cyst nematode is widespread in Iowa, but it does not necessarily cause obvious symptoms of damage above ground. Digging soybean roots and looking for SCN females is a quick way to check for SCN during the growing season. SCN females have been observed on soybean plants in central Iowa, so scouting statewide can occur for the next two months. Checking roots of SCN-resistant soybeans will show how well the resistance is working; very few females should be observed.

Source: Greg Tylka, Department of Plant Pathology and
John Holmes, ISU Extension Field Agronomist, Clarion