

Test Now For Soybean Nematodes

DEKALB, Ill. — Farmers should plan their strategy now to fight a soybean pest which is robbing yields as it continues to spread, advises an agronomist. The problem is soybean cyst nematode. SCN, which has caused yield losses of 10 to 80 percent and has been associated with soybean sudden death syndrome.

Larry Martin, regional agronomist for DeKalb-Pfizer Genetics, encourages farmers to start with a soil test this fall, select resistant varieties for 1987, rotate crops or use nematicides. "Use a soil test to see if you have nematodes," says Martin. "Take two soil samples per acre to a depth of six inches.

"Send the samples to a university or private lab specializing in nematode

analysis," the agronomist continues. SCN soil populations below 20 viable eggs and larvae per 100 cubic centimeters of soil are considered safe.

"If you have a SCN problem, rotate to non-host crops," Martin says. "Yields will increase and soil SCN populations will decrease."

The DeKalb-Pfizer official does not recommend routine use of SCN resistant varieties. In non-infested soil, yields of resistant varieties tend to be lower than susceptible varieties and nematode mutations may develop with continuous use of resistant varieties.

Nematicides are also available according to Martin. Their use should be considered only where SCN problems occur, where adapted resistant varieties are unavailable or when susceptible

varieties are planted.

Nematode symptoms include stunted plants that have turned yellow or died in oval shaped areas the agronomist says. During excellent growing conditions, these symptoms may be masked since the root system is able to absorb sufficient quantities of water and nutrients to sustain life.

"Nematodes are spread by virtually anything that moves through an infested field, including equipment, man, livestock, wildlife, wind and rain runoff," Martin says. Martin theorizes that root wounds created by cyst nematodes allow for the invasion of soybean sudden death syndrome which kills the soybean prematurely and further robs yields.

Helms Requests Investigation of PIK Certificates

WASHINGTON — Senator Jesse Helms, chairman of the Senate Agriculture Committee, has asked the General Accounting Office to conduct a thorough investigation of the use of generic payment-in-kind certificates by agricultural producers and grain trading companies.

Helms asked the GAO to focus special attention on the marketing practice of combining the substitution of grain used as collateral for government loans with the so-called "pik-and-roll" method. The Department of Agriculture recently prohibited the use of PIK certificates to redeem substituted crop loan collateral. (Under that method, grain from lower market price areas is substituted for grain in higher-price areas, then redeemed for PIK certificates. PIK certificates are denominated

in dollars rather than bushels. Therefore, grain warehousemen are able to profit from the difference in market prices because a PIK certificate can be used to purchase a larger quantity of grain in low-price areas.)

"Agriculture Secretary Lyng acted responsibly in putting a stop to this waste of taxpayer money," said Helms.

"The substitute, PIK-and-roll method used by many grain handlers to line their pockets represents one of the worse abuses of farm programs I have seen in years," said Helms. "It has hurt farmers and taxpayers alike. The American people have a right to know who has profited from this scheme, and then Congress can decide if further action should be taken."

Try These Tips For Selecting Corn Hybrids

MOUNT JOY — Selecting next year's corn hybrid based on a few simple guidelines will help ensure satisfaction, advises an agronomist for a leading seed company.

"Base seed selection on performance in multiple checks over a wide area and for more than one year," says Bill Fleet, agronomist for Pioneer Hi-Bred International, Inc. "This shows the hybrid's ability to perform in a wide range of environments and minimizes risk from adverse weather conditions, insects or disease. Information available from many sources should be used to decide the best hybrids for your area."

Each hybrid has different characteristics and is designed to perform in different situations. Fleet says a farmer's hybrid choice should be made for his own farm. "If you select a hybrid for traits you don't really need, you may have to compromise on critical traits needed for successful corn production in your area. Harvest timing, depending on your use for the corn, should also be considered," he says.

Establish realistic yield goals

before hybrid selection. Fleet also suggests that farmers purchase a package of hybrids suited to the area. "This spreads out harvest and helps spread out your risk," he says.

One critical factor that is getting more and more attention is how fast the corn dries down after it reaches physiological maturity or black layer. "This reduces drying costs and helps reduce risks associated with adverse weather conditions later in the year," he says.

Fleet suggests making yield checks and comparisons between individual fields and among other farms, and not comparing two hybrids solely by how they look in the field. "Relative performance between hybrids is not as affected by soil variations as by environments," he notes. "An attractive field may not always be the highest-yielding."

Salesmen with product knowledge can offer advice about which hybrids most nearly fit individual needs. They can also provide information on new hybrids, which Fleet recommends trying on a limited basis until they have proven themselves.

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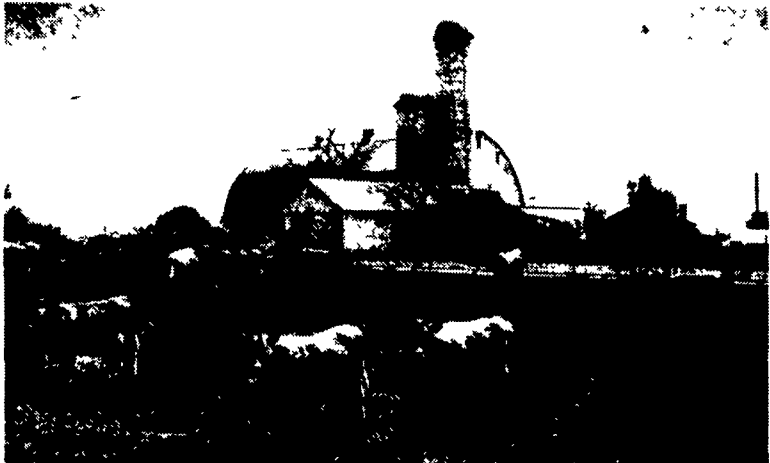
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