

Learn To Manage Root Rot

DEKALB, Ill. — Soybean farmers face a variety of diseases that can reduce yields. But phytophthora root rot (PRR) has become perhaps the most damaging of all soybean diseases.

Though found more often in Illinois and areas east, it can occur anywhere excessive moisture becomes a problem. Yet growers can manage this disease effectively.

PRR can invade the roots of both seedlings and more mature plants, said Herb Brown, regional agronomist for DEKALB Plant Genetics. Though most severe in low, poorly drained soils, it can be especially damaging to susceptible soybean varieties grown in PRR-infested soils that are saturated beyond capacity.

"Since free water is required for infection, farmers can reduce the potential for PRR by reducing soil compaction, improving soil drainage, and adopting tillage methods and crop rotations that minimize destruction of soil structure," Brown said.

Despite these efforts, certain fields and segments of the U.S. soybean production area will still have problems with PRR. But farmers can utilize chemical and genetic resistance to minimize the yield-robbing effects of PRR, said

Brown.

He said growers can apply metalaxyl to the seed or to the soil at planting time. It typically is used when farmers plant a susceptible variety in fields where PRR has been a frequent problem. Protection will vary from seedling stage to full-season maturity, depending on the amount and method of chemical usage.

Another option is planting PRR-resistant soybean varieties. Soybean breeders have been very successful in developing varieties that contain one or more genes that impart PRR resistance without sacrificing the very important characteristics of high-yield potential, standability, shatter resistance and quick, strong emergence, the DEKALB agronomist said.

"When farmers utilize PRR-resistant soybean varieties, they are reducing the risks associated with growing soybeans in PRR-prone soils," Brown said. "This will become increasingly important as farmers adopt some of the soil-saving practices required by conservation legislation."

For example, the heavy residue associated with no-till planting can result in cooler, wetter soils that more easily produce conditions favorable to PRR infection. Man-made, soil-saving structures that

restrict water runoff tend to concentrate water in low areas, increasing the likelihood of waterlogged soil which promote

PRR infection, he said.

"Farmers cannot control the occurrence of PRR, but those who use sound management techniques

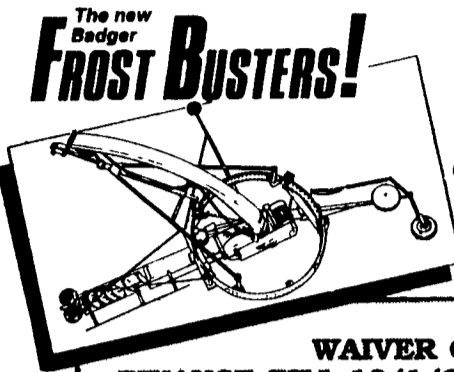
and plant soybean varieties with PRR resistance have a much better chance of preventing serious yield losses," Brown said.



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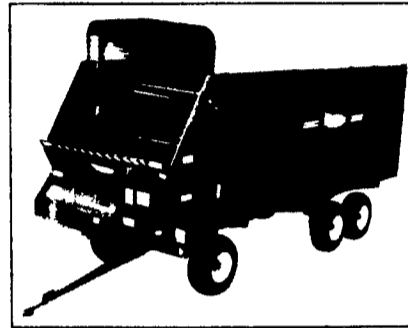
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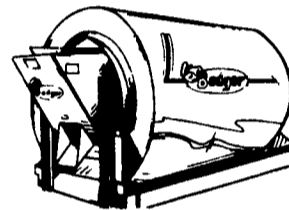
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more Pennsylvania people.

The association is giving a management seminar in New Castle, Pa. on Saturday, May 11. The seminar will be hosted by Hugh and Joann Forbes at the Country Corner Hall across from Forbes Buffalo Inn, on the corner of routes 388 and 108. The cost (which includes coffee break and lunch) will be \$15 for association members and \$20 for nonmembers. For reservations, call Margery Kutney (717) 965-2237 before May 8.



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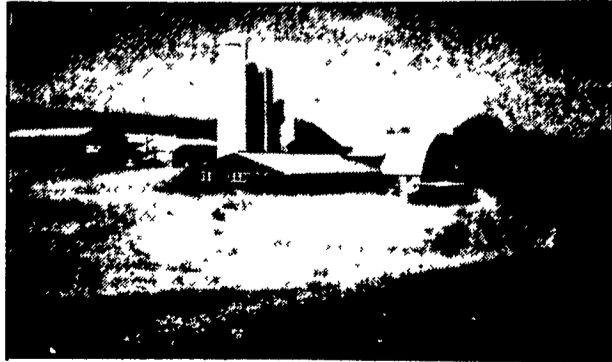
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