

Saving our Crops from Soybean Rust

The American Phytopathological Society Takes Action



Soybean rust is a fungal disease

of soybean that has severely affected soybean crops in Africa, Asia, Australia, and South America. In some areas, soybean rust has caused yield losses of up to 80 percent. In November 2004, plant pathologists discovered soybean rust for the first time in the continental U.S. near Baton Rouge, Louisiana. Since then, it has been identified in 19 states, three Mexican states and one Canadian province. It was discovered in the major soybean production area of the north central U.S. for the first time when it was identified in both Illinois and Indiana late in the 2006 growing season. In 2007, first reports were made in Oklahoma, Kansas, Nebraska and Iowa as well as Ontario, Canada. Rust infected fields in Iowa were found nearly to the Minnesota border.

Soybean rust is identified by tiny, volcano-like, raised pustules with rust spores inside that appear on the underside of leaves of infected plants. As rust severity increases, premature defoliation and early maturation of plants is common. Soybean rust can go from a few pustules in a field to full field defoliation in as little as two weeks.

APS is committed to remaining one step ahead of this destructive and fast spreading disease by providing agricultural professionals with the education and resources needed to combat soybean rust.

APS first highlighted soybean rust in a feature article titled, *Soybean Rust: Is the U.S. Soybean Crop At Risk?* that appeared on its website (www.apsnet.org/online/feature/rust/) in June 2003. APS also held a soybean rust symposium with leading rust researchers at the 2003 and 2005 APS Annual Meetings. APS quickly responded to the discovery of soybean rust in the U.S. by developing an online soybean rust information center. This website (www.plantmanagementnetwork.org/infocenter) provides a comprehensive database of soybean rust information as well as breaking news and links to up-to-the-minute soybean rust forecasting and tracking information.

To further the understanding of this disease and its management, APS, in cooperation with the USDA, the United Soybean Board, and several other organizations, has coordinated annual National Soybean Rust Symposiums since 2005. The most recent symposium, held in Louisville, Kentucky in December of 2007, attracted over 250 attendees representing universities, state and federal government, agricultural industries and soybean producers. Plans are already under way for the next symposium to be held in 2009.



Healthy Plants • Healthy World

For more information on how APS is working to improve the understanding of soybean rust and other plant diseases, please contact APS at apsinfo@scisoc.org or +1.651.454.7250.

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