

Harvesting Begins Slowly For OK Soybean Crop

LITTLE ROCK, ARK.

Patience may be this year's most important virtue for Arkansas soybean growers. Rain early in the season forced some growers to plant and replant up to three times and when some growers finally got a stand, the harvest window was pushed deep into September.

"Ninety-plus percent is still two to five weeks from being harvested," Jeremy Ross, extension soybean agronomist with the University of Arkansas Division of Agriculture, said Wednesday.

U of A Division of Agriculture personnel are keeping a close watch on the state's maturing soybean crop because of concerns over insect infestations, weeds and the potential for disease, including the spread of Asian soybean rust.

While the soybean crop "looks OK overall," Ross said, that perception varies widely from south to north in the soybean growing counties. "South of Interstate 40, the crop looks good based on the early maturing groups that have been harvested. North of I-40, it's spotty.

"It's going to be a good crop, but below the five-year average," Ross said.

Arkansas growers planted slightly more acreage in 2009, 3.4 million, compared with 3.3 million in 2008, according to the National Agricultural Statistics Service.

Extensive rainfall in some areas earlier this year continues to be a problem for producers, Ross said, noting that more than 50 inches of rain were recorded in Poinsett County test plots near Weiner since the end of April.

The rains contributed to mounting disease problems, including aerial blight and frogeye leaf spot, and delayed or prevented some weed treatments, Ross said. Soybean rust was in at least eight counties as of Tuesday: Ashley, Chicot, Desha, Drew, Jefferson, Lee, Lincoln and Phillips. Monfort said on Thursday he expected that number to climb on Friday.

"We are not recommending a blanket application of rust fungicides for the state," said Scott Monfort, extension plant pathologist for the U of A Division of Agriculture. However, "the southeast and east-central part of the state is more at risk and should be a primary area of concern when considering applying a fungicide."

Herbicide-resistant Palmer amaranth, commonly called pigweed, was showing up "pretty much statewide."

The latter is quickly moving up the list of glyphosate-resistant weeds, Ross said, with pigweed in some fields "standing 12-15 inches above the bean canopy." Producers have demonstrated interest in the herbicide Ignite for weed control coupled with the LibertyLink soybeans to replace Roundup Ready soybean system.

Wes Kirkpatrick, Desha County extension staff chair for the division, said soybean fields in his county "run the gamut. Overall, there is some potential for good yields."

He predicted many soybean producers in Southeast Arkansas anticipate the harvest to really begin in one-and-a-half to two weeks.

"Because of weather issues, yields will be across the board," Kirkpatrick predicted.

About 5 percent of the 249,000 acres planted in soybeans in Phillips County have been harvested, said Robert Goodson, extension agent for the division. He said yields are running from 18 to 65 bushels an acre, with an average of 45 bushels an acre. Pigweed is posing a major

problem for producers in his county, Goodson said.

Gus Wilson, extension staff chair for the division in adjoining Chicot County, said early yields in the county have varied from 25 bushels to the acre for dryland soybeans to irrigated beans totaling 70 bushels to the acre.

Both pigweed and grass have posed some problems in Chicot, he observed, and the crop encountered infestations of bollworms and red-banded stinkbug.



The redbanded and redshouldered stink bugs are very similar, but the redbanded stink bug is a little more slender.

Division of Agriculture photo by Scott Akin.



The redbanded stink bug could become a challenging pest for soybean growers in southern Arkansas.

Division of Agriculture photo by Scott Akin.

Scott Akin, division entomologist at the University of Arkansas-Monticello, said on Thursday the redbanded stink bug has been moving north from Louisiana each year and is positioned to be a potential pest in South Arkansas soybeans.

"In addition to being tougher to control than our traditional stink bugs, such as the Southern green stink bug, the redbanded stink bug may cause more damage as well," he said. Identification of the redbanded stink bug can be a challenge, because it is sometimes confused with a less problematic species, the redshouldered stink bug.

"While the redbanded stink bug has a fixed spine on the ventral (belly) side of the abdomen, it can be difficult to see with the naked eye," Akin said. "One notable characteristic of the redbanded stink bug is the overall shape relative to that of our other stink bugs – it is generally more slender and rounded on the corners."

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