

# Pioneer Talks Crops

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**C**orn harvest has slowed since the remnants of Hurricane Ike passed through the morning of Sept. 14. Most of the mid-South experienced high winds in excess of 50 mph causing damage to homes, trees and crops. Managing harvest will be a chore in

2008.

Evaluate corn hybrids based on long-term performance. Many growers in the mid-South have asked why the corn crop was so good this year. The main reason for such a good year is that the average temperature was much cooler than normal. Corn performs better when we experience cooler nights. In fact, temperatures this year were so much cooler during grain fill that this period was extended, causing a later harvest. The crop took much longer to get to black layer and to dry down than it did last year.

It is important to evaluate hybrids based on multiyear performance. Next year might have a rainy and cloudy season in southeast Missouri, and hybrid performance will be completely different. Thus, look at yield data that shows comparisons across several environments. Also, look at data that provides multiyear comparisons. Consider data from different states and how hybrids performed in those trials in other years. This is the best way to evaluate hybrids to predict performance on your farm.

Sudden death syndrome (SDS) has appeared in several fields across the mid-South this year.

SDS (see photo) is a midseason soilborne disease which usually occurs under high yield potential. The disease is favored by soybean cyst nematodes, irrigation and cool wet weather. Symptoms first appear as yellow spots between the veins. The spots extend into yellow streaks then turn brown. The major veins of the leaf remain green. Leaves detach from affected plants leaving the petioles attached to the plant. Root systems are reduced with a brown vascular discoloration, but the pith remains white. If symptoms occur early enough to cause pod abortion, yield can be reduced significantly. However, if symptoms occur in a field after midpod fill, damage may be minimal. Growers can use the following SDS management strategies:

- Plant more resistant varieties early in the year and more susceptible varieties later in the year

- Plant more than one soybean maturity group

- Manage soybean cyst nematode, maintain soil fertility and try to avoid crop stress

- Improve drainage in poorly drained fields and avoid compaction

- Do not delay harvesting fields infected with SDS

Wheat planting is right around the corner. This year, several growers have expressed interest in knowing more about managing wheat. High-yielding wheat can be achieved by managing fertility, insects and disease. Plant good quality treated wheat seed, which will help ensure winter survival. Other tips to im-

prove yields are to split apply nitrogen, spray for aphids in the fall and spring, apply fungicides for disease control and control weeds early. Hopefully, with the right environment higher yields can be made. Δ

