Pioneer Talks Crops

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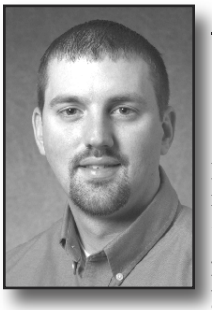

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Growers are finally getting the double-crop soybeans planted, and the heat is beginning to set in for much of the mid-South and South. The corn crop looks good in most areas at this point, and if the weather cooperates, growers should be looking forward to some very good yields again this fall.

Scout soybean fields regularly for insects and disease. Japanese beetles, stinkbugs and bean leaf beetles have been spotted in several areas. Also, be on the lookout for fall armyworms, corn earworms, green looper and clover worms in soybean fields. The soybean crop is later this year, so insects will be hitting them sooner than normal in the life of the plant. The University of Missouri states that thresholds for insect control such as bean leaf beetles before bloom is 30 percent leaf defoliation and from bloom to maturity is 20 percent leaf defoliation or 10 percent pod damage. Soybeans are not able to compensate as well during reproductive stages.

Southwestern corn borer (SWCB) populations in particular have been on the rise, and it is important for growers to monitor fields closely this year due to the later planted crop. SWCB is a small, milky white worm with brown to black dots along its body. Be sure to scout non-Bt corn hybrids for egg masses and newly hatched larvae. It is important to detect infestations early. Once larvae bore into the stalk, they are nearly impossible to kill. The University of Missouri states the threshold for SWCB is when 25 percent of plants are infested with egg masses or small larvae. Labeled insecticide should be used for control.

Fungicide application for plant health in soybeans is getting closer as well. Most fungicide companies state the optimum timing for plant health application of fungicides on soybeans is at the R3 stage of development. This is determined by inspecting the top four nodes of the plant for a one-fourth inch pods. An insecticide also can be applied at this time to take advantage of the application made for the fungicide. Monitor double-crop soybeans especially for insects and disease.

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The amount of yield response from a fungicide treatment depends on several factors that influence disease development. Those fields with the heaviest residue levels on the soil surface tend to have higher risk due to more potential disease inoculum. While there is no completely disease-resistant hybrid on the market, some products have better ability to slow the development of diseases. Fields filling grain later in the season, when disease pressure is highest, may have the most to gain from a fungicide treatment. Disease development is very dependent on favorable conditions. Typically cooler and wetter environments favor fungal diseases. Δ