

David G. Hallauer
District Extension Agent
Crops & Soils/Horticulture

Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS) – Correlation to Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN)

KSU Plant Pathologist Doug Jardine recently continued his summer ‘field tours’ and has started to pass on an increasing number of reports of soybean Sudden Death Syndrome (SDS). For us here in northeast Kansas, it’s presence along the Kansas River Valley is common place. Increasingly, however, it’s become an issue in upland acreages as well.

SDS tends to be most severe on well-managed soybeans with a high yield potential. It also tends to be more prevalent in fields that are planted early when soils are cool and wet, exhibiting compaction or are infested with soybean cyst nematode. If you are seeing SDS, take a look at the situations in which you are finding it, and determine what can be done to help alleviate issues for next year. In particular, it might be a good time to look at SCN issues.

Soybean cyst nematode and Sudden Death Syndrome are to some degree tied together and to another degree unrelated. While you can’t manage SDS by selecting varieties with good SCN ratings (good SCN varieties could still be susceptible to SDS), the presence of SDS *is* strongly correlated with the presence of SCN. In other words, where SDS is present, soil samples should be taken to determine the level of SCN present and how it will need to be managed.

After harvest is an excellent time to soil sample for the soybean cyst nematode. Sampling the soil in a known infested field is very similar to collecting a soil fertility sample. With a soil probe and bucket, walk a ‘Z’ or ‘W’ pattern across the field, collecting cores from directly in the row, since that is where the nematodes are most likely to be found. Sample to a depth of six to eight inches, collecting a total of 18 - 24 cores. Mix the soil thoroughly, and place a pint jars worth into a re-sealable, gallon-size plastic bag. Samples can be taken to any Meadowlark Extension District office for shipping. Don’t get sampled this fall? Don’t worry. Cysts are present throughout the year, so sampling can take place at any time.

Give Cool-Season Grasses a Boost

Our first cool season turf fertilization opportunity arrives just as we turn the page in to September. If you could only fertilize your lawn once a year, this would be the best time to do it.

As cool season grasses enter fall, stands naturally begin to thicken via tillering (forming new shoots at the base of existing plants) and spreading by underground stems called rhizomes. Fall fertilization can really help with that process.

Apply one to one and a half pounds of actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet using a quick-release nitrogen source (most of them are quick release or a combination of quick and slow release – either should be fine).

A second window of opportunity comes in November, with the purpose of helping grass green up earlier next spring. This application can provide the nutrients needed until summer. Again, use a quick-release nitrogen formula applied at the rate of one-pound actual nitrogen per 1,000 square feet.