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***Tar Spot Confirmation – What Does it Mean?***

The confirmation of Tar Spot in corn last fall didn't mean a lot to most producers. It came so late in the season and levels (in most cases) were light enough yield wasn't affected.

The confirmation of it in late June this season may end up being a different story. As of this writing, the disease has only been confirmed in Doniphan County and across the line in Holt County Missouri and Richardson County Nebraska. While that's a positive, it also means the areas surrounding those counties could soon see disease pressure as well.

What's next? Scouting is the best first step. Corn is the only known host for tar spot, so a previous crop corn or a neighboring field that had it last year are likely first locations to look. As the name implies, the lesion will look like a speck of dry tar on the leaf. You won't be able to remove it via rubbing on it with your finger like you will insect frass, and they may be pretty difficult to even find at first. Diseases like Physoderma brown spot are similar looking (and common this year), but distribution on the leaf will be a little different. If in doubt, contact any of our offices or submit a sample to the KSU Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab for confirmation.

If found, the decision making begins. The typical timing for most leaf diseases (VT/R1) actually work fairly well at reducing Tar Spot severity and protecting yield. If the disease doesn't show up until R3 or after, fungicide applications may not even be necessary. If the disease is severe, however, and earlier applications are required, keep scouting to make sure the disease hasn't returned. If disease pressure is low and temperatures stay high, a single, later application is an option to consider as well.

Early scouting across the Meadowlark Extension District thus far this season hasn't resulted in additional findings of Tar Spot. To follow the spread of the disease, check out the Corn ipmPIPE tracking website at: <https://corn.ipmpipe.org/tarspot/> . Additional information can be found in the KSU Agronomy eUpdate newsletter at: <https://eupdate.agronomy.ksu.edu/> or contact me at any District Office or via e-mail to [dhallaue@ksu.edu](mailto:dhallaue@ksu.edu) .