



David's Desk

An update on soybean health issues from
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Choose wisely

When it comes to selecting soybean varieties for 2009, it pays to take some time and do it right. That means doing a little homework, before sitting down with your seedsman.

The homework involves studying 2008 university yield trials and public tests of varieties. Use these independent research evaluations to identify the highest yielders that have performed well over a range of conditions.

Once you've selected several top-yielding varieties, determine the seed traits you need. Check your yield maps, talk to your crop advisor and gather your notes on the history of environmental conditions and diseases in your fields.

Play strong defense

Generally speaking, growers in Indiana, Iowa and Illinois commonly face soybean cyst nematode and sudden death syndrome. Farmers in the non-Soybean Belt areas of Wisconsin and Michigan often struggle with brown stem rot and white mold. North Dakotans and northwestern Minnesotans wrestle with iron chlorosis. In Ohio and Indiana, *Phytophthora* is a major problem.

Say you've got a field that takes longer to drain and always has *Pythium* or *Phytophthora* problems. For *Phytophthora*, get the best resistance package – both genetics and field tolerance. Treating the seed with a fungicide is a good idea to

reduce stand loss caused by both diseases. In contrast, if you always get a good stand and never have *Pythium* or other issues, then leave off the fungicide seed treatment and put your highest yielding variety in that field.

It's all about yield

The goal is to minimize risk, since every season brings different challenges depending on temperatures, rainfall, pests and diseases. Managing input costs presents challenges, too.

In fact, we've been hearing about farmers returning to conventional soybean varieties in 2009 to lower input costs and take advantage of overseas demand for non-GMO beans. (Some grain elevators have been offering significant premiums for clear- and grey-hilum beans.)

No matter

which direction you go in 2009, at the end of the day, it's all about yield. And there's still room to improve. A survey of Indiana growers showed that 28 percent plant one soybean variety, and another 25 percent plant two varieties.

That's a lot of Hoosier farmers who are limiting the genetic pool of what they're capable of obtaining, yield-wise. These farmers may be putting themselves at risk. Choose soybean varieties that yield and meet the agronomic needs of each field.

That's your soybean checkoff. Delivering results.

*Courtesy of Iowa State University

