



# David's Desk

An update on soybean health issues from **David Wright, Ph.D.**, education director of the NCSRP's Plant Health Initiative

## It's testing time

It's nearly invisible, lives underground, and has been around for years. Above-ground symptoms – stunting, yellowing and premature maturation – are often attributed to other agronomic issues. In many cases, there are no above-ground symptoms at all.

Since the onslaught of aphids and rust, soybean cyst nematode (SCN) hasn't been garnering much attention. Many growers simply plant SCN-resistant soybean varieties, and assume that will take care of their SCN problem. The problem is, it might not.

### SCN is reproducing on SCN-resistant varieties

Nematologists report that SCN is spreading, and SCN types (formerly called races) are shifting. In some cases, it's overcoming SCN-resistant soybean varieties.

For example, PI88788 is a widely-used source of SCN resistance. Recent survey results in Iowa show that SCN populations with greater

than 10 percent reproduction on PI88788 are widespread. A few populations have been found with reproduction exceeding 50 percent on PI88788. So what should you do?

### Take the Test. Beat the Pest.

The first step is learning whether SCN is present in your fields. After harvest in the fall is an ideal time to sample. (Information on how to sample for SCN is available at [www.planthealth.info/order.htm](http://www.planthealth.info/order.htm).) If you don't have time to do it yourself, delegate the job to your crop advisor or agronomist.

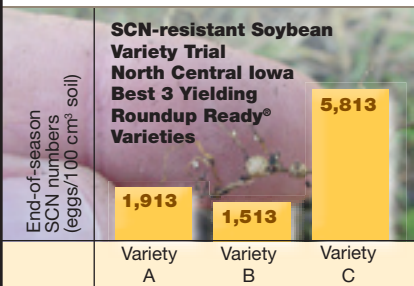
If soil tests show that you have SCN, the next step is managing it. This involves monitoring populations; rotating to non-host crops such as corn, oats or alfalfa; and growing SCN-resistant varieties.

If possible, switch to a variety with SCN resistance from something other than PI88788, such as Peking or PI437654 (also called Hartwig). If that's not feasible, at least switch to a different SCN-resistant variety.

The goal is to maintain profitable soybean yields while keeping SCN densities at low to medium levels. And, the only way to know what your SCN numbers are doing is to monitor them. Because even the highest-yielding SCN-resistant soybean varieties can vary widely in the amount of nematode control they provide. (Please see the chart.)

For more information, there's a new SCN Management Field Guide available at [www.soybeancyst.info](http://www.soybeancyst.info).

**That's your soybean checkoff. Delivering results.**



*In one variety trial in an SCN-infested field, yields of the top three SCN-resistant soybean varieties were not significantly different. At harvest, however, there were significant differences in SCN egg populations.*

Data courtesy of Dr. Greg Tylka, Iowa State University

