

Crop Diseases

This might be a refresher for some, but I wanted to remind everyone about the disease triangle as we begin to monitor fields for any disease pressure. The disease triangle is made up of three parts, and all must be present for the disease to develop. If any of the three parts are not present, the disease will not develop. Here are those three parts and what you can do to manage them.

1. Susceptible Host – corn, soybeans, alfalfa, etc.

- Manage with hybrids and varieties that have disease resistance or tolerance
- Rotate crops to avoid building up the levels of disease pressure

2. Pathogen – the disease-causing organism

- Manage residue to reduce overwintering
- Use fungicides and seed treatments when necessary

3. Favorable Environment – the weather conditions that favor infection

- Improve drainage
- Adjust planting dates and populations

The first reports of tar spot in Iowa started on June 16th this year. You can follow the confirmed reports on the map [here](#). However, the forecasted heat wave should halt any progression of the disease. Environmental conditions that tar spot favors are 60-70°F and high relative humidity. In the short history we have of tar spot in Iowa, we have not typically seen any impact from infections that occur before VT. If you want to see the risk for disease in your area, that can be done with the crop risk tool [here](#).

Insect Pressure

As a rule of thumb, the best time to start digging roots to scout for corn rootworm is when the lighting bugs begin to show up. One of the easiest ways to check for them is to remove the soil and plant at one time and immediately place it in a bucket of water. I typically work that root ball around in the water to loosen the soil from the root. Within a few minutes the larvae will begin to float to the top and can be counted. If you want help checking, please be sure to reach out and we can schedule a time to do some digging.

Weather

The long-range forecasters have somewhat backed off their thoughts on a drought in the corn belt this year. While they do think it is still possible, the probabilities have come down. A few forecasters still think there is the possibility of some major droughts but in a much smaller area, which unfortunately happens to still include western Iowa.

If you have any issues with your crop or agronomy-related questions, please reach out to your local DSM or me directly.

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