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Soybean Cyst Nematode Testing

Harvest is a great time to make an ‘on the go’ evaluation of a farm’s performance as we finish out the crop year. Not only can you see physical differences in the field as you harvest, but see how they correlate on yield monitor software as well.

For soybean growers, harvest is a great opportunity to determine the reason behind lower yielding portions of individual farms. A quick look at fertility and soil maps can eliminate some issues, particularly when it comes to thinner soil types, etc..., and yet some spots may be lower yielding for no apparent reason. That’s when it might be time to consider soybean cyst nematode (SCN) pressure.

Soybean cyst nematodes are a microscopic organism capable in high numbers of causing significant yield losses – without visual symptomology. As such, regular sampling is encouraged to help growers monitor SCN numbers. Immediately following harvest is a great time to check for SCN, and it can be done as soil samples are pulled for nutrient analysis as well.

Divide fields in to sections based on cropping history, yield, soil type, or, in fairly uniform fields, smaller sub fields. From each area, collect 10 to 20 cores from a depth of six to eight inches while walking in a systemic pattern across the sample area. Mix cores together and submit one pint of soil in a plastic bag. Samples should be refrigerated until shipping and shipped as quickly as possible via overnight means to a testing lab of your choice.

If you are a Meadowlark Extension District grower interested in free SCN testing available on a *limited* basis through the KSU Plant Disease Diagnostic Lab, contact me at any District Office or e-mail me at dhallaue@ksu.edu . Sample numbers are limited. Inquire soon.

Tall in the Fall? Turf Questions Answered...

Whether it’s because we don’t want to mow one more time – or we’re actually interested in turf grass health – you’ll often hear recommendations made about allowing lawns to grow tall prior to the onset of winter. Fact is, it’s probably not the best idea.

If turf has been mowed at an appropriate height all summer, there’s no need to change now. Extra ‘cover’ isn’t likely to prevent cold injury to crowns, and a canopy left too high during the winter may lay over and mat down, leading to winter-diseases like snow mold. You’re much better off implementing other facets of a sound turf grass management program like fertilizing, watering and continued appropriate mowing through the remainder of the fall.

Bottom line: stay within the recommended mowing height range. For tall fescue turf grass species, that’s two and a half to three and a half inches. For Kentucky bluegrass lawns, two to three inches in height is appropriate. These heights will encourage carbohydrate storage in the root system going in to fall – and benefit the lawn as green up begins again next spring.