



SCN EGGS: Soybean Cyst Nematode eggs are the small white balls attached to soybean roots. In large numbers, the nematodes that lay these eggs can dramatically reduce soybean yields.

CROPS > SOYBEAN

Spring soybean cyst nematode testing can reveal egg levels

If you didn't test for SCN last fall, do it this spring to best protect from this fast pest.

Lon Tonneson 1 | Mar 20, 2018

Testing fields for soybean cyst nematode is usually a fall chore, but you can do it in the spring, too — and it might be a good idea if you didn't get it done last fall.

SCN continues to spread, having been confirmed in about 30 counties in South Dakota and 19 in North Dakota. The nematode eggs are spread from field to field with soil. It hitches a ride on tillage equipment that isn't cleaned off between fields, or it floats in on flood waters. Ducks, geese and other birds can spread the nematodes as well.

The microscopic worm can take 15-30% of your beans' yield potential, without causing any visible signs of damage to soybeans during the growing season.

If your soil test comes back positive, you'll want to do something this spring. Otherwise the population will keep growing and may even explode to something super serious, according to Sam Markell, North Dakota State University Extension plant pathologist.

Markell and Connie Strunk, South Dakota State University plant pathologist, agree that if you have any level of SCN in a field, you need to start managing for it. SCN egg populations can dramatically rise in just one season, to the point that the next time you grow soybeans in the field you will see yield losses.

The first step is to consider rotating crops. Soybeans and dry beans are susceptible to SCN, but every other crop is a good choice for reducing egg levels.

SCN-resistant varieties are a good option, too. It is also important to rotate varieties that have resistance. It will help nematodes from developing a resistance to the resistant soybean plants.

In certain situations, some of the new SCN seed treatments may help. They are not meant to replace genetic resistance or crop rotation, but may be a good investment if egg levels are very high and you aren't going to rotate away from soybeans.

Where to sample

Take soil samples from field entrances, previously flooded areas, waterfowl activity areas, high pH areas, low yielding or stunted areas, or along low spots of the field.

Collect 20 soil cores 0-6 inches deep in a zig-zag pattern. Mix the cores thoroughly and put the soil in a sample bag or a plastic bag. You only need a pint of soil for testing.

Divide larger fields in 10- to 20-acre parcels and sampled each part separately.

Keep soil samples at room temperature, or in a cooler, until shipped or delivered to a plant diagnostic clinic. Two labs that do SCN testing are:

- **North Dakota State University**

NDSU Plant Diagnostic Lab

306 Walster Hall

Fargo, ND 58102

- **SDSU Plant Diagnostic Lab**

153 Plant Diagnostic Clinic

(SPSB) Box 2108

Brookings, SD 57007

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