

IPM NEWSLETTER

Update for Field Crops and Their Pests

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Corn and Soybean Updates (Dr. Angela McClure, Extension Corn & Soybean Specialist)

We made a little progress this week, but not as much as was hoped for. Today's rains will keep fields wet over the weekend, but hopefully next week's weather will be more favorable for harvest. In northern counties in west TN and in central TN where some of the September rains were missed, corn is about 50% harvested with maybe 20 to 30% of bean acres harvested. In southern west TN counties, progress has been slower and everybody I spoke with indicated they are way behind where they need to be right now.

Corn is not drying down in the field and has been running above 18% in many areas this week. Most areas had about 3 days total of good drying weather last week with winds from the north and lower humidity levels. Otherwise, it has been drizzling, humid, raining, overcast with little air movement or some combination of the aforementioned conditions that do not promote drying. Late May and June planted corn fields typically do not dry down well, even in a year with optimal drying conditions. Grain facilities that do not have dryers may not take corn that is above 17% moisture, so check with your local handler. Facilities with dryers may not have a limit on high moisture corn, but growers will have to accept the price dock if corn has to be sold now.

Seed quality in early planted soybeans took a hit in southern west TN counties. Group 3 and 4 soybeans that were near ready for harvest when the 2+ weeks of rain came in September have more seed damage than has been seen in a while--molded, discolored, shriveled seed and some sprouted seed. Some farmers have reported 50% and more damaged seed in what has been harvested.



The photo here is from a plot at Jackson of an Early 4 variety that was almost ready to cut before the September rains. We did not have any seed sprouting but did have lots of damage. This plot was harvested on 10/1/09. The plants had been treated with a fungicide at R3, but anthracnose was present on the mature beans. Anthracnose can cause smaller than normal seed. A number of disease organisms can infect seed when they mature under wet

conditions causing moldy, stained and shriveled seed. Phomopsis seed decay is a primary cause of the

whitish mold on seed in this sample. Cercospora leaf blight (not present in this sample) causes the purple stained seed. Frogeye Leaf spot can affect seed quality. Seed with more than 8% damage will be assigned a Sample Grade class at the elevator. Damaged seed do not store well and elevators cannot accept heavily damaged soybean seed due to spoilage issues.

Soybean green stems and immature green plants are being reported as a problem in some fields. Soybean ‘green stem’ (plant has a green stem, a few green leaves but pods are mature and brown) are a nuisance on the combine but generally do not cause quality issues with seed. A desiccant will not dry up a green stem, so there is little that should be done about this situation.

‘Green plant’ problems occur when a variety has both mature and immature plants (green stems, leaves, and immature pods) at harvest time. As long as the percentage is small (1 or 2%) folks typically don’t do anything about this situation. If the more mature plants aren’t at risk of seed popping out, waiting an additional 10 days or so can improve the maturity of the seeds on the green plants and minimize green seed dock. Another option is to broadcast-apply a harvest aid (Gramoxone Inteon is best option) to kill the green plants, causing them to drop leaves and forcing the immature seeds to shut down prematurely. The immature seed that receives a desiccant may not mature normally (there may still be some quality dock if enough remain in the collected seed), but they will be lower in moisture and not a butterbean in the harvested seed.

There is one variety that is producing enough green plants in the field that a desiccant is being regularly applied before harvest. This variety is NK 49Q9. Several producers have reported 5% or more immature plants, combining issues, green beans in harvested seed that are causing a dock at the elevator. A number of fields with this variety were treated with a desiccant this week and hopefully that will help the situation.

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