

Partnership Perk



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Southern rust of corn found in southwestern Iowa.

Producers in the southwestern third of Iowa should be watching for southern rust on corn. On August 13, a field in Taylor County was treated; nearly all plants had southern rust lesions.

Southern rust is more of a concern than common rust on corn, and positive identification is critical. Key differences between the two rusts are:

- Southern rust pustules are usually only found on the upper leaf surface, compared with common rust pustules that are found on the upper and lower leaf surfaces.
- Southern rust pustules tend to be round, whereas common rust pustules are typically more elongated
- Southern rust spores are orange to orange brown and pustules tend to be more densely clustered, while common rust has brick red spores and pustules tend to be more scattered on the leaf
- Southern rust is favored by warm (77—82 °F) and humid conditions while common rust is favored by cooler temperatures

Foliar fungicides are effective against both common and southern rust. Since southern rust usually arrives in Iowa late in the grain-fill period, in most years the corn crop is not often economically affected. However with delayed crop development this year, southern rust is occurring earlier in the grain-fill period, leading to greater potential losses, so scouting is advised. Southern rust has a life cycle of 3—6 days (compared with common rust that has a 7—10 day cycle). That means under favorable conditions the southern rust pathogen can spread rapidly.

There is not a set economic threshold, but producers finding southern rust in fields should closely monitor disease development; scout fields every 4 to 5 days.

Long story short:

Fields in the southwestern third of Iowa should be scouted for southern rust now. Fields should be scouted every 4 to 5 days and if more than 50% of plants in a field have southern rust symptoms, treatment may be warranted.

Source:

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