

## Soybean Rust Risk Assessment is Prudent Action

To protect the United States from the accidental introduction of Asian soybean rust disease, the 25,000 members of the American Soybean Association (ASA) are saying that the soybean rust risk assessment currently being conducted by the United States Department of Agriculture's (USDA) Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service (APHIS) should be completed before any potential commodity soybean imports from rust-affected countries are contemplated.

"Given the impact soybean rust would have on soybean production and growers in the U.S., the only prudent course of action is to avoid imports from diseased areas until APHIS completes its risk assessment," said ASA President Ron Heck, a soybean producer from Perry, Iowa. "We know APHIS scientists are working diligently on the risk assessment, and ASA supports their science-based evaluation."

Soybean rust is not present in the continental United States. It has been present throughout Asia and Australia for decades. In 1996, the disease moved from Asia into Uganda, and by 2002, it had spread throughout much of Africa. In 2001, soybean rust was found in South America and it has spread throughout the soybean growing areas of Brazil, Paraguay, and Bolivia. By 2003, rust had also spread to a northern, non-soybean growing area of Argentina.

For more than two years, ASA has been working with APHIS to make sure the U.S. is protected from the accidental introduction of rust, a fungal disease that attacks the foliage of a soybean plant. Rust spores can be transmitted on the plant stems, pods, and leaves that

are typically mixed with bulk shipments of commodity grade whole soybeans. The disease can reduce yields up to 80 percent or more, but does not affect the quality or safety of the soybeans.

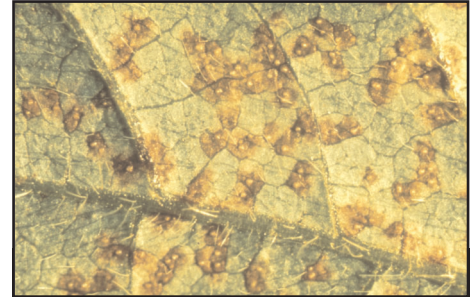
"ASA and APHIS share the goal of developing procedures that will protect our 74 million acres of soybeans while ensuring that the procedures are science-based," Heck said. "Asian rust is already causing significant soybean crop losses in countries where it has been detected. ASA's goal is to make sure soybean rust isn't accidentally introduced here in the U.S."

In a Phytosanitary Alert issued by the North American Plant Protection Organization (NAPPO), it was estimated that soybean rust could adversely affect all soybean varieties in the United States at an estimated cost of \$7.2 billion, which represents about half the value of the U.S. soybean crop.

A drought-reduced 2003 soybean crop, coupled with record exports and strong domestic demand, has led to U.S. soybean ending stocks at the lowest levels in nearly 30 years. Due to this tight supply situation, USDA analysts project imports of 430,000 metric tons of soybean meal will be needed to sustain and feed the U.S. livestock demand base.

"From risk assessment information APHIS has shared with ASA, soybean meal can continue to be imported under the proper protocols without risk of introducing soybean rust into the United States," Heck said. "The safety of importing commodity soybeans remains much less clear than for properly-handled soybean meal. ASA has raised many questions on this issue to make sure APHIS

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BOTANICAL RESEARCH INSTITUTE, FT. WORTH, TX



Soybean rust tan lesions with reddish brown lesions in the center.

scientists are looking at all the potential risks and pulling together as much scientific knowledge as is necessary to protect the U.S. soybean industry."

Commodity soybeans grown in Canada could be safely imported into the United States since soybean rust is not present in North America.

There is the potential for a natural introduction of soybean rust into the United States that would likely result from spores being carried on wind currents or storms from West Africa or northern South America and the Caribbean. However, it is critically important for researchers to have as much time as possible to develop rust-resistant soybean varieties.

ASA is working to significantly increase federal soybean rust research funding. Soybean producers are asking Congress to allocate more resources for soybean rust, and ASA is seeking \$2.8 million for the development of rust resistant varieties and fungicide efficacy testing. Growers can help by becoming ASA members, and helping ASA lobby Congress to get these needed funds. Go to [www.soygrowers.com](http://www.soygrowers.com) to become a member today.

## ASA and Checkoff Build New Markets for U.S. Soy

Building new markets for U.S. soybeans and increasing soybean consumption are goals of both the American Soybean Association (ASA) and the soybean checkoff. While ASA concentrates on policy efforts and operates nine international marketing offices overseas, the United Soybean Board administers checkoff dollars to benefit U.S. soybean producers through marketing, production improvement and new uses development.

In the area of new uses development, the soybean checkoff introduced 18 new soy-based products last year to help increase demand for U.S. soybeans.

"Soy can be used in the categories of plastics, coatings and inks, lubricants, adhesives and specialty products such as solvents," said ASA First Vice President Neal Bredehoeft. "These are major market segments that use petroleum products."

Compared to products made from petrochemicals, soy-based products produce lower volatile organic compound emission levels, making them more compliant with government standards.

"The soybean checkoff is helping create soy-enhanced products that create a safer and cleaner environment, while providing high performance characteristics," Bredehoeft said. "That benefits consumers as well as soybean farmers."

Some of the new soy products that have been introduced are: polyurethane spray foam, polyurethane resin, water-diluted soy oil lubricant, hand cleaner, soy-based coating used on roofs, methyl soyate paint stripper, ink cleaner and mop cleaner.

In the new uses market, soy ink was introduced to the newspaper industry in 1987. Currently, soy ink is used by one-third of America's nearly 10,000 newspapers.

"The soybean checkoff devoted dollars to researching the technical attributes of soy-based ink, and determining some standards for soy ink," said ASA Board member Gary Joachim. "Once the product was standardized and proven to be superior for a lot of uses, the checkoff dollars were then used for promotion. With the help of the checkoff, soy ink has made tremendous inroads into the market in the last 10 to 12 years."

Growth in new uses development for U.S. soybeans can help give farmers an important competitive edge.

"We've seen it with soy ink, which is getting to be a mature market," Joachim said. "We see it with products that the checkoff is working on now like the carpet backing, which is a potentially huge market, and we see it with things like biodiesel and lubricants."

Through the cooperative efforts of ASA and the soybean checkoff, biodiesel is a fast growing alternative energy source. In addition, biodiesel offers the best potential for displacing large quantities of surplus soybean oil, which will increase soybean prices. Just 100 million gallons of biodiesel will displace 750,000 pounds of soybean oil.

"The soybean checkoff has funded soy biodiesel research for more than a decade, making it one

of the most tested of all renewable fuels," said ASA Board member Bob Metz.

Biodiesel is better for the environment because it is made from renewable resources and has lower emissions compared to petroleum diesel. Since it is made in the U.S. from renewable resources such as soybeans, its use decreases U.S. dependence on foreign oil and contributes to our own economy.

"The United States is almost 60 percent dependent on foreign oil, and soy biodiesel will help lessen that dependence," Metz said. "Biodiesel's relative affordability and ease of use has led to its widespread acclaim as a practical and easily implemented source of clean, homegrown renewable energy."

Checkoff-funded efforts are helping increase U.S. soy utilization through efficient and effective development and commercialization of soy-based products.

The United Soybean Board is made up of 62 farmer-directors who oversee the investments of the soybean checkoff on behalf of all U.S. soybean farmers.

"One of the reasons that the soybean checkoff is effective is because soybean farmers are the ones who sit on the Board and make the decisions about projects and investments for checkoff dollars," said Bredehoeft. "Farmers know what farmers need, and the checkoff provides the opportunity for soybean farmers to help their industry grow and prosper."

PHOTO COURTESY OF UNITED SOYBEAN BOARD



Soy ink, developed less than 15 years ago, now captures 25 percent of the U.S. commercial ink market, due in part to promotional efforts by the soybean checkoff. Soybean oil-based inks are now common and widely used to print brighter, more colorful newspapers.