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Pa. Soybean Yields Promising Despite Record Rainfall

HARRISBURG, PA (September 25, 2018) – Despite planting challenges, disease pressure and record rainfall in parts of the Commonwealth, soybeans across Pennsylvania are generally in good condition and promising in yield.

“On one end of the spectrum, it looks like we could have excellent soybean yields in many fields across Pennsylvania despite the difficult weather conditions we’ve had,” says Dr. Paul Esker, Penn State Plant Pathologist. “But on the other end of the spectrum, we have fields that have been hit hard, especially in counties where rainfall amounts were greatest, with a combination of insect damage, fungal disease, and sprouting in the pods. In some of the hardest hit areas, we’re also hearing reports of lodging and very wet soils that will make harvest challenging.”

Esker reports that throughout the state, beans planted at dates typical for their area are maturing nicely with nearly all fields at or nearing completion of pod fill. “In terms of overall field conditions, most canopied well, had very good height and many pods per plant. However, abundant rainfall did impact heavier and poorly drained soils where thinner stands, less healthy plants and fewer pods per plants have been observed.”

With the humid weather, disease was certainly an issue in soybeans this year. “Our two most common diseases, frogeye leafspot and brown spot, were in abundance with frequent occurrences of downy mildew as well,” says Esker. “Frogeye leaf spot has been the main foliar disease we have documented in many fields and the warm and humid conditions contributed to an increase of the disease. We have also seen more soybean vein necrosis virus, and in many of these fields, we noted that there were more thrips in comparison to previous years. Sudden death syndrome has been documented in the central part of Pennsylvania, as well as to the west, and brown stem rot was observed in the same fields in a few cases.”

Soybeans that were planted earlier showed evidence of white mold in the central and northern portions of the state, says Esker. “Moist conditions and high-yield environments did result in some occurrences of white mold, although we saw no field-wide infestations in our August crop surveys. Fields that had received a mid-season fungicide application showed less disease pressure than others.

“Insects populations remained in check this year with bean leaf beetles, aphids and Japanese beetles present in tolerable numbers,” Esker continues. “Soybean thrips were somewhat common, particularly in the

southeastern corner of the state as well as in a few fields in the western areas. We've also seen some stink bug issues in pods."

Esker cautions that continued rains will create challenges in terms of preparation for harvest. Grain quality could be a question if the conditions are wet. "Yield is there but we still need to make sure we get the harvest accomplished safely and in a timely manner," he says.

About the Pennsylvania Soybean Board

The [Pennsylvania Soybean Board](http://www.pasoybean.org) is a farmer-controlled Board responsible for managing Pennsylvania's share of funds received from the nationwide Soybean Checkoff program. The funding is available under an assessment program, approved by Congress in 1990, under which soybean farmers contribute 50 cents of every \$100 they receive for their beans at the first point of sale. Funds are used to develop markets, educate consumers, and research new ways to utilize and produce soybeans more efficiently. For more information, visit www.pasoybean.org.

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