

Pathologist: No soybean rust forecast yet

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Purdue University plant pathologist Greg Shaner says there's no forecast, as yet, for 2006 Midwest soybean rust, with much depending upon weather patterns.

Shaner said only time and weather conditions will determine whether Asian soybean rust moves into the Midwest this year.

As much as agricultural researchers learned about the fungal disease last year, they still can't say if and when rust will infect the Corn Belt, Shaner said. He advises producers to keep a close eye on their fields and on weather reports this season.

"We've had so little experience with this disease in the United States that it's really difficult to say what our risk for rust infection is in the Midwest," Shaner said. "I think most people feel that here in the Corn Belt we're not likely to see rust before soybeans flower in late July and August, and probably even later than that."

Last year soybean rust was confined to the southern United States, never moving north of the Mason-Dixon Line. So far this year, rust infection has been reported Florida, Georgia, Alabama and the southern tip of Texas.

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