

Soybean rust PIPE: Past, present and future

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A new, open-access article in the *Journal of Integrated Pest Management* describes the origin, function, successes, limitations, and future of the Soybean Rust Pest Information Platform for Extension and Education (PIPE).

Soybean rust (SBR), a potentially devastating disease of soybean caused by the [fungus](#) *Phakospora pachyrhizi* Sydow, was first detected in the continental United States in the fall of 2004. Beginning in 2005, the SBR-Pest Information Platform for Extension and Education (PIPE), has been used to provide soybean farmers with the information needed to make the best possible SBR [management decisions](#). It is estimated that SBR-PIPE has saved farmers between \$209-299 million, annually, since 2005.

The "engine" for the SBR-PIPE is state-of-the-art information technology delivered through the Internet, and the "fuel" for the engine is accurate and timely SBR monitoring data and observations made by trained individuals, as well as publicly available [weather data](#) used to run SBR [predictive models](#). Some consider the SBR-PIPE to represent the best of what can be accomplished in the United States when everyone works together toward accomplishing a "must-do" mission.

However, the authors conclude that the future of the SBR-PIPE is uncertain. If funding for the sentinel network or the IT infrastructure continues to erode, there will likely be comparable [erosion](#) of the value of the SBR-PIPE to stakeholders. SBR monitoring in 2010 was only 25% of what it was in 2005. However, most scientists feel that this level of monitoring is acceptable as long as the emphasis in the South

continues to detect early outbreaks in a timely manner. If monitoring levels are cut further in the South, it will be progressively more difficult to accurately follow SBR progress from year to year. If stakeholders feel like they can no longer trust the data being generated within the context of the SBR-PIPE, it will fold and cease to exist. However, as long as monitoring and the IT infrastructure can be maintained at its current level, the SBR-PIPE will continue to be a viable entity as long as it is needed.

More information: [DOI: 10.1603/IPM11001](https://doi.org/10.1603/IPM11001)

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