

Avoid Yield Losses from Volunteer Corn

Overview

Volunteer corn can pose a significant threat to soybean yields. Kernels left over from harvest the year before can germinate in the spring and compete with soybeans in the growing season.

What you should know

- Research shows significant yield loss results from delayed control of volunteer corn, regardless of the control method. A University of Nebraska-Lincoln study found that the highest yield reduction occurred when volunteer corn was controlled too late at the R2 soybean growth stage or later.
- A study from South Dakota State University reported yield losses of up to 54% in soybeans from volunteer corn.
- Clumps of volunteer corn from dropped ears impact yields at four times the rate of individual plants.

Action steps

1. **Manage fall tillage:** Let seed stay on the surface, rather than tilling it under where it may germinate prior to freezing.
2. **Control volunteer corn early:** There are several herbicides labeled for control of volunteer corn in soybeans.
3. **Watch for corn rootworm pressure:** Any benefit to CRW management from crop rotation is nullified if a heavy volunteer corn population is present in soybeans, since CRW larvae will feed and mature on uncontrolled volunteer corn.

<https://cropwatch.unl.edu/2018/impacts-volunteer-corn-crop-yields>.
<https://blog-crop-news.extension.umn.edu/2018/10/managing-potential-for-volunteer-corn.html>.



Volunteer corn can be controlled through management practices and herbicide programs.



30-Second Summary

- Volunteer corn poses a significant threat to soybean yield.
- A combination of management practices and herbicides can help control volunteer corn.
- Choose a herbicide that is labeled for control of volunteer corn in soybeans.

NOTES:

For more information, contact:



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