

Nagging Reminder About Stalk Health Concerns

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Back in mid-August, I fear-mongered about the risk of stalk health problems with this year's corn crop due to the multitude of stresses many fields have experienced throughout the growing season (Nielsen, 2003). Given the continued slower than normal crop progress and delayed harvest (Indiana Ag. Statistics, 9/22/03) plus the recent and forecasted stormy weather statewide that threatens to delay harvest further, the concern about the consequences of poor stalk health is more immediate and real.

Many of the cornfields I have walked in recent weeks are indeed afflicted with varying degrees of stalk damage by root/stalk rots and European corn borer tunneling. Stalk lodging itself is not very prevalent YET, but the risk of its occurrence is quite high in many fields if the right (or wrong) storm decides to invade the neighborhood.

The development of stalk health tribulations cannot be stopped once started, but growers nonetheless can attempt to schedule high-risk fields for as early a harvest as possible once field conditions improve. Obviously, scheduling high-risk fields for early harvest requires that these fields have been previously identified as high risk for stalk lodging potential. While admittedly a pain in the rear to do, I strongly encourage growers to spend time walking fields in coming days and determine which are at greatest risk of stalk lodging due to stalk health concerns.

Related References

Indiana Ag. Statistics Service. 9/22/03. **Indiana Crop & Weather Report**. U.S. Dept. of Agriculture. Available on the Web at <http://www.nass.usda.gov/in/cropweat/2003/we3803.pdf> [URL verified 9/26/03].

Nielsen, R.L. (Bob). 2003. **Stalk Health Issues in Stressed Corn**. Purdue Univ. Corny News Network. Available on the Web at <http://www.kingcorn.org/news/articles.03/StalkHealth-0813.html>

Don't forget, this and other timely information about corn can be viewed at the Chat 'n Chew Café on the Web at <http://www.kingcorn.org/cafe>. For other information about corn, take a look at the Corn Growers' Guidebook on the Web at <http://www.kingcorn.org>.