Soybean Cyst Nematode (SCN) management:

Early detection and crop rotations

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Challenge

SCN is the most serious soybean pest in Illinois and other soybean producing states. SCN can go undetected and reach damaging levels because it:

- is small and has below-ground feeding habits,
- may not show above-ground symptoms under ideal growing conditions, and
- produces symptoms that are similar to those expressed by other causes.

These factors, coupled with the preferred cropping system of growing soybeans every other year in rotation with corn, allow populaitons to reach damaging levels before they are detected. Farmers must learn to detect SCN early and to manage populations above the economic threshold level.

Young white females of SCN on field-grown soybeans - a diagnostic tool.

Response

Our educational and research programs concentrate on early detection methods involving field scouting and plant and soil sampling, and on management practices that integrate nonhost crops and
resistant soybeans. Our objectives are to:

- improve soybean health and yield,
- reduce SCN populations,
- maintain yield potentials of our resistant varieties, and
- use control practices that are economical and safe to the environment.

Educational programs are being intensified in northern Illinois, where SCN is relatively new.

SCN - resistant and -susceptible plants growing side-by-side.