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Iowa Soybean Rust Team tests Fast Track System

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Abstract
A "test" of the Asian Soybean Fast Track System (Figure 1) was conducted in late April by randomly selecting 40 of the nearly 500 Iowa First Detectors (www.plantpath.iastate.edu/soybeanrust/firstdetectors) and sending these individuals color images of soybean leaves with symptoms of Asian soybean rust. "This exercise (test) was of critical importance to ensure effective and timely communication among key participants in the Fast Track System, namely the Iowa First Detectors, Triage Team members (who are mostly ISU Extension specialists), and the Iowa State University Plant Disease Clinic," stated David Wright, Director of Production Technology, Iowa Soybean Promotion Board and member of the Iowa Soybean Rust Team.

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![Figure 1. Iowa Fast Track System](1)

"This exercise (test) was of critical importance to ensure effective and timely communication among key participants in the Fast Track System, namely the Iowa First Detectors, Triage Team members (who are mostly ISU Extension specialists), and the Iowa State University Plant Disease Clinic," stated David Wright, Director of Production Technology, Iowa Soybean Promotion Board and member of the Iowa Soybean Rust Team. The Iowa Soybean Rust Team has established an Asian soybean rust "Fast Track System" to decrease the time from the detection of Asian soybean rust in Iowa to the time that it is diagnosed and confirmed for each county in Iowa. There is no charge for Iowa farmers and First Detectors who use this system.

The 40 First Detectors receiving "hypothetical soybean rust samples" had been trained within the last 10 months by members of the Iowa Soybean Rust Team to identify Asian soybean rust. If the First Detector believes that a suspect sample may indeed be Asian soybean rust, they are to contact a Triage Team member of the Iowa Asian Soybean Rust Fast Track System as soon as possible to alert them that they have received a "suspect sample" from a soybean grower that could be Asian soybean rust. As part of the exercise, the majority of the First Detectors successfully contacted a Triage Team member by phone within 10 minutes and then made arrangements to transfer the suspect sample to the Triage Team member. The hypothetical samples were to be treated just like actual samples in that they were to be double bagged, properly labeled, and delivered to the Triage Team member by the fastest way possible. Although communication rather than speed was emphasized for this exercise, the majority of the hypothetical soybean rust samples were on their way to Triage Team.
Iowa Triage Team members, who are ISU Extension specialists and have received more extensive training in identifying Asian soybean rust (and other soybean diseases), play a critical role in the Fast Track System. If Triage Team members determine that a "suspect sample" is Asian soybean rust, they are to immediately contact the ISU Plant Disease Clinic that a suspect sample has been received from a First Detector and that they will be sending the suspect Asian soybean rust sample to the Plant Disease Clinic, which is located on the ISU campus in Ames. Because communication and not speed was emphasized for this exercise, most Triage Team members sent their hypothetical "suspect samples" by mail; however, nearly every Triage Team member entered in their exercise log that they would have driven to ISU to deliver the suspect sample in a real event. Once an Asian soybean rust suspect sample arrives at the clinic, it receives top priority by ISU plant disease diagnosticians, Paula Flynn and Christine Engelbrecht.

Edward Drake, a First Detector from Corning, said, "This trial run (exercise) was very helpful in determining the proper steps that need to be done if this disease does develop."

Chris Nelson, Adams County extension education director was the Triage Team member that Drake contacted regarding his "hypothetical" Asian soybean rust sample. "This (exercise) was great! We will be ready," said Nelson.

Randy Kool, a First Detector from Adel, also commented, "This would be a good practice for all First Detectors" "it helps internalize the process."

Early detection and prompt and accurate diagnoses of new diseases and pests are essential prerequisites to initiate effective and timely response measures that threaten Iowa agriculture.

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