

May 10, 2011



Dr. Arlen Leholm
Executive Director
North Central Regional Association
of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors
1450 Linden Drive Room 212D
University of Wisconsin - Madison
Madison, WI 53706-1562

Dear Dr. Leholm,

I am writing because I understand that the nematologists at the land-grant universities in the north central region currently are seeking renewal of their regional project (NC-1035) and that there are some questions about details of their proposed new project. I am the coordinator and the research director of the North Central Soybean Research Program (NCSRP), an organization of soybean checkoff boards from 12 states in the north central region. The NCSRP has had a very productive and formal working relationship with the north central nematologists since the mid 1990s, and we have a strong interest in the NC-1035 group remaining intact as a formal regional project. For nearly 20 years, NCSRP and the regional NC-1035 nematologists have worked together on research and education projects aimed at helping soybean growers manage the soybean cyst nematode (SCN). Regional research projects coordinated and conducted by these scientists with soybean checkoff funding from the NCSRP have examined the effects of row-spacing, tillage, and plant populations on SCN reproduction and yield loss, the effects of host resistance on yield loss and SCN population dynamics throughout the region, and the effects of growing resistant soybean cultivars repeatedly on the virulence phenotypes (HG types) of natural SCN populations in the region. Also, a very large, well-coordinated, and effective grower education project titled the SCN Coalition was funded for more than \$1 million by NCSRP and involved the staff of the state soybean boards and the nematologists in the land-grant universities in 12 north central states in the late 1990s. Most recently (March 2011), the NC-1035 nematologists (and some associated extension plant pathologists at land-grant universities in the north central region) received funding from NCSRP for a three-year project to examine the effects of new seed treatment protectants on SCN reproduction and soybean yields.

As detailed above, the NCSRP has supported the activities of the north central nematologists (the NC-1035 group) since the 1990s and NCSRP looks forward to continuing that relationship in the future. The NCSRP has funded annual meeting expenses

for NC-1035 numerous times in the past decade, and on many occasions, the scientists of NC-1035 provided technical information that was posted on the very popular website www.planthealth.info. Also, with information and input from the NC-1035 nematologists, NCSRP developed several print publications for soybean growers, including the 5th edition of the widely used “Soybean Cyst Nematode Management Guide” (see www.planthealth.info/pdf_docs/SCNGuide_5thEd.pdf). Most recently, results of research conducted by the scientists of NC-1035 and funded by NCSRP were used to create a print publication titled “Soybean Cyst Nematode Management: Understanding How Management Actions Influence Nematode Populations” that is being used throughout the north central states (see www.planthealth.info/pdf_docs/SCN_mgmt_NCSRP.pdf).

I understand that reviewers of the new project proposal for the NC-1035 group had questions about exactly how the technical information produced from the new project will be disseminated to growers and other stakeholders. As the person who oversees all of the content for www.planthealth.info, I can tell you that all information created and/or compiled by the NC-1035 nematologists that relates to the biology and management of SCN (and any other plant-parasitic nematode feeding on soybean, for that matter) will be posted on the web site as soon as the information becomes available. I believe that this represents a primary way that the NC-1035 nematologists will conduct the technology transfer activities (Objectives 3A, 3B, and 3C) of the proposed new project.

The front page of www.planthealth.info contains a personal message from me, and I would highlight in my comments the new information that relates to SCN whenever such new information is put on the web site. I have the funds and staff to maintain and update this web site very quickly and would gladly incorporate the information and findings created by the NC-1035 group into the web site. Some of the information from the proposed NC-1035 project that we would incorporate into www.planthealth.info as soon as it becomes available includes:

- lists of SCN-resistant soybean cultivars (*Objective 1A of proposed new project*)
- results of field evaluations of SCN-resistant soybean cultivars (*Objective 1A of proposed new project*)
- updated maps of the distribution of SCN in the north central states (*Objective 1B of proposed new project*)
- results of HG type test surveys conducted on SCN populations throughout the region (*Objective 1B of proposed new project*)
- results of field testing of new seed treatments being marketed for SCN management (*Objective 1C of proposed new project*)

Finally, I want to mention that in the very near future, NCSRP will begin designing and developing educational materials for use with portable electronic devices (iPads,

smartphones, eBook readers, etc.) as a way to reach tech-savvy growers and the agribusiness professionals who advise them. The NCSRP would be very interested in using the information generated from Objectives 1A, 1B, and 1C of the proposed new NC-1035 project in these new types of publications.

In summary, the soybean growers and the state soybean checkoff organizations are primary stakeholders for the nematologists at the land-grant universities in the north central region. The state soybean boards individually and the NCSRP, collectively representing the 12 state soybean boards, have a long history of funding much of the research and extension education activities conducted by this group of nematologists. The soybean checkoff community relies heavily on these scientists to generate unbiased and research-based information about the biology and management of SCN, and we need the NC-1035 nematologists to stay together as a coordinated regional project to maintain their excellent research and extension education activities. On behalf of the NCSRP and representing the state soybean checkoff organizations in the north central region, I strongly support renewal of the NC-1035 nematologists group. I can assure you that the NCSRP will assist the NC-1035 scientists in every way possible to disseminate the results of their work on the project to soybean growers throughout the north central region in print, on www.planthealth.info, and in new educational materials designed for portable electronic devices. I strongly encourage the North Central Regional Association of Agricultural Experiment Station Directors to approve their proposal for a new project.

Please contact me if you have any questions or need more information about anything mentioned above.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "David L. Wright". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

David L. Wright, Ph.D.

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