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## Phomopsis Seed Decay in Soybeans

The fungal complex *Diaporthe/Phomopsis* is responsible for causing pod and stem blight, stem canker and Phomopsis seed decay of soybeans. Harvest delays due to wet weather can cause reduced seed weight and seed germination in infected plants. Damage of 2% or more reduces the grade of the harvested soybeans and thus profitability. This fungal complex infecting soybeans can cause liver damage in chickens and a reduction in the quality of oil, flour and other products.

### SYMPTOMS:

- Linear rows of black specks, pycnidia (fruiting structures), on the stem and pods showing Pod and Stem Blight – the pycnidia only present on dead plant tissue
- Phomopsis infected seed appears shriveled, cracked and with a white, chalky mold



Photo: Iowa Soybean Association  
Pycnidia on stem



Photo: Iowa Soybean Association  
Phomopsis infected seed



Photo: Iowa Soybean Association  
Phomopsis infected seed pod

### DEVELOPMENT:

- This fungal pathogen complex overwinters on infected soybean or other crop residue
- Infection can and usually occurs early in the summer from water splashing spores onto the plant, but symptoms don't develop until plant begins to senesce
- Disease symptoms are favored by warm, humid conditions. Moisture at plant maturity plays a role in disease severity

## MANAGEMENT:

Understanding field soil nutrient levels is important since this disease complex can be worse when potassium levels are low in the soil. Tillage and crop rotation will help to reduce the incidence of infection in soybeans since the disease complex fungal pathogens survive on infected crop residue. A fungicide application at R3 to R6 can reduce the infection of the seed and improve seed quality. Harvesting infected fields earlier will also help to reduce the level of seed infection.

## References

Iowa Soybean Association Publication  
University of Missouri, Late Season Soybean Diseases  
University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Extension and Outreach, RPD #509

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