



Best Practices Bulletin – Preventing the Spread of Asian Soybean Rust

August 2004

The Asian strain of soybean rust (SBR) caused by *P. pachyrhizi* is extremely aggressive. Recent outbreaks of the Asian strain of soybean rust (SBR) have occurred in South America causing USA and Canadian producers to ask APHIS and CFIA, respectively, to evaluate the entry status of soybean grain, seed and meal from countries where SBR is known to occur and to assess the risk of infection in North America.

APHIS Summary Conclusions on SBR (from USDA, APHIS Feb 2004)

- Clean soybean seed, clean soybean grain and soybean meal are not pathways for the introduction of SBR.
- *Phakopsora pachyrhizi* is an obligate parasite and its spores rapidly lose viability after the plant dies. It will not infect or colonize dead or dried plant tissue.
- Since becoming established in South America a few years ago, SBR has spread rapidly and is expected to continue spreading naturally in the Western Hemisphere and eventually to the North America.
- SBR introduction into the North America could cause significant crop losses, ultimately resulting in widespread and complex market disruptions.
- Soybean leaf debris associated with “foreign material” found in soybean grain presents a theoretical pathway for the introduction of SBR. However, normal commercial practices minimize the presence of “foreign material” to less than 2%. Moreover, as it is normal commercial practice to harvest soybeans after the plants have been defoliated, leaf debris should compose only a fraction of the “foreign material”; therefore, making “foreign material” found in soybean grain an unlikely pathway for the introduction of SBR.

Recommended best practices for travelers (adapted from ASA Soybean Rust Alert April 2004)

For personnel traveling and working in South America, extra precautions are advised in order to limit the risk of transmitting the disease to North America:

1. Keep field clothing and personal effects segregated from other clothes.
2. Take large plastic bags to keep clothes and personal effects segregated during your travel
3. Wash all field clothing and footwear before leaving the country and returning to North America.
4. Make note on your Customs Declaration that you have visited a farm and pack any returning footwear where they are easily accessible for inspection by Customs at the airport once in North America.
5. Wipe-down suitcase, carry-on and field personal effects with bleach to disinfect once you have arrived back in North America.

Best practices for seed preparation

For preparation of South American seed destined for North America, extra diligence is advised in order to limit the risk of transmitting SBR to North America via seed shipments. Plant debris and foreign material represents a theoretical pathway for the disease – it is recommended to take extra precautions to ensure seed and shipping containers destined for North America are as clean and free of debris as possible.