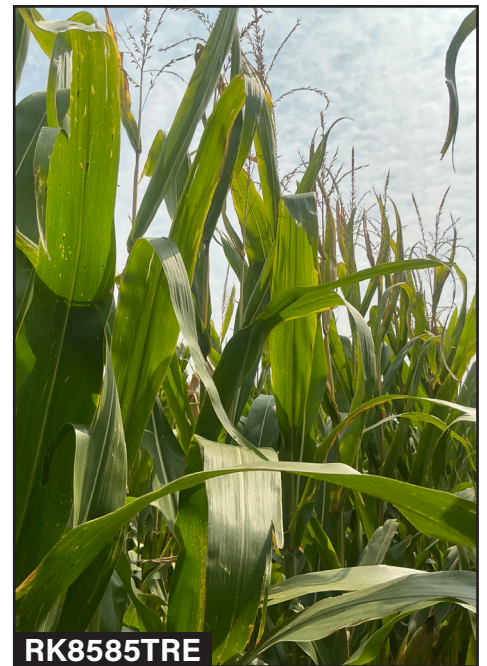


Southern Rust in the Western Corn Belt

Southern Rust isn't a disease we typically battle every year in the western Corn Belt. But when it does show up—as it has this season—it can quickly take hold under the right conditions. Warm nights, high humidity, and extended leaf wetness have created a favorable environment for the disease to spread across parts of Nebraska, Iowa, South Dakota, and Minnesota.

The photos below show the difference Southern Rust pressure can make:

- **Susceptible Hybrid** – rapid lesion spread, early leaf death, and reduced green leaf area during critical grain-fill.
- **Renk Hybrids (RK773TRE & RK8585TRE)** – strong tolerance, maintaining healthier canopies even under visible disease pressure.



Why This Matters

Southern Rust can strip away yield potential fast—especially when it moves in around VT–R2 growth stages. **Even though fungicide applications can help, timing is critical, as this disease is very difficult to manage once symptoms appear. The key to consistent performance is genetics that hold up in the face of unexpected challenges.**

That's why **Renk's product selection process doesn't just focus on common diseases** like Tar Spot, GLS, or Anthracnose. We also evaluate products against *non-typical threats* such as Southern Rust, ensuring farmers have dependable yield protection no matter what the season throws at them.

Additional Agronomic Considerations

Ear Rots & Husk Coverage – Products with longer husk coverage that are severely infected with Southern Rust may have a higher chance of ear rots as plants reach maturity and husks flare open. Monitoring ear health in these hybrids is especially important.

Stalk Lodging Risk – Severely infected plants often see stalk strength compromised. Be sure to scout later in the season and plan to harvest these fields in a timely manner to minimize standability losses.

Stalk Rot & Crown Rot: Harvest Management is Key

Recognizing the Problem

As corn moves into late reproductive stages, many fields across the Corn Belt are beginning to show increased signs of stalk rot and crown rot. These diseases are often triggered by stress conditions earlier in the season—such as drought, nutrient imbalances, hail damage, or high disease pressure from foliar pathogens like Southern Rust or Tar Spot.



The photos above highlight two major issues:

- **Stalk Rot** – plants breaking at or just above the node, leaving ears on the ground and making harvest losses likely.
- **Crown Rot** – plants rotting at the base, with vascular tissue turning brown and leading to standability issues.

Why This Matters

Both stalk rot and crown rot reduce the plant's ability to transport water and nutrients during the critical grain-fill period. As a result, standability is compromised, and significant harvest losses can occur if not managed properly. Fields under severe stress may appear healthy from the road, but closer inspection often reveals widespread rot and weakened stalks.

What to Do Heading Into Harvest

Scout Fields Now

- Walk fields and perform the “push” or “pinch” test to identify stalk integrity.
- Prioritize scouting fields that had high foliar disease levels, drought stress, or unusually high yield potential that may have depleted stalk reserves.

Adjust Harvest Order

- Fields with significant stalk or crown rot should be harvested first, even if grain moisture is slightly higher.
- Focus on areas with visible lodging to reduce ear loss and harvestability issues.

Harvest in a Timely Manner

- Delaying harvest in severely infected fields can result in rapid standability decline.
- Harvesting early may mean drying grain, but it's often more economical than losing bushels to downed corn.