

Neonicotinoid seed treatments ‘best option’ for soil pests, but should be used judiciously, study says

The topic of neonicotinoid seed treatments (NSTs) continues to keep researchers searching for answers.

A study from the University of Maryland’s Department of Entomology concludes that NSTs play an important role in grain crop production and can be a useful tool for insect pest management, but using when pest pressure is low may not increase yield relative to seeds not treated with insecticides.

“When pest pressure is high, NSTs provide a convenient and economical way to protect crops. However, our work demonstrates that the use of NSTs may not always be economically beneficial in the mid-Atlantic region. Producers can make the best use of NSTs where they regularly have high early season insect pest pressure,” the researchers wrote.

The three-year study looked at Cruiser (thiamethoxam) and Gaucho (imidacloprid) in a three-year grain crop rotation of full-season soybean, winter wheat, double-crop soybean and corn.

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Additional research is under way to study insect pressure and response to seed treatments. “Seed treatments do an excellent job and are our best option for soil pests. We need them to work when there is pressure,” said Kelly Hamby, University of Maryland extension specialist. “Using them so widely likely increases the risk of insecticide resistance developing, in addition to other non-target impacts.”

Read the study here: <http://bit.ly/2naHgmf>

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