

## Sentinel Plots

To help manage soybean rust, the use of sentinel plots will play a major role in providing information on early detection and spread of the disease. Sentinel plots established in Alabama will be part of the National Soybean Rust Sentinel and Monitoring Network, a USDA Animal and Plant Health Inspection Service Project, as well as a component of the North Central Soybean Research Project.

The sentinel plots have two objectives. First, sentinel plots will be planted to the field ahead of the traditional crop, thus acting as a “trap crop” for spores of the pathogen. If rust is detected in the sentinel plots, state- and region-wide alerts will be made giving producers some lead time to make proper management decisions. The information will also be given to the USDA as part of the nation-wide rust monitoring project. This information can be viewed at the USDA Public Soybean Rust site ([www.sbrusa.net](http://www.sbrusa.net)). This site contains maps for observations, recommendations and scouting information controlled by state soybean specialists.

Second, the sentinel plots will provide for the collection of epidemiological data, which will be used to formulate disease progress models that will be used to develop better management tools in the following years.

Approximately 25 sentinel plots are being planted throughout Alabama. Plots will be located at Alabama Agricultural Experiment Stations or in fields of cooperating soybean growers. Sentinel plots will be approximately 50 x 50 ft plots of soybeans planted early with an early maturing variety in order to get the plants to canopy as quickly as possible (this encourages soybean rust development). Plots will be scouted weekly by Auburn University extension personnel, researchers, or cooperating growers.



[Photo:Scout in Sentinal Plot](#)