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The SCN Coalition Wins National Best of NAMA Award for Public Relations Campaign

Waukesha, Wis. (April 17, 2019) – The SCN Coalition – a public/checkoff/private partnership formed in 2018 to increase the number of growers who are actively managing soybean cyst nematode (SCN) – won a national Best of NAMA Award in 2019 for their public relations campaign. The National Agri-Marketing Association (NAMA) is the largest U.S. association for marketing and agribusiness, and the Best of NAMA Awards honor the nation's best work in agricultural communications. Since its launch, The SCN Coalition's public relations efforts have made 12.1 million impressions among North America's soybean growers.

"The SCN Coalition is a large team effort, and there are dozens of people responsible for our successful campaign launch," says Samuel Markell, plant pathologist at North Dakota State University and leader of The SCN Coalition. "We built the SCN Coalition as a public-private partnership. This includes [university scientists](#) in 28 states and Ontario."

Other partners include grower checkoff organizations such as the North Central Soybean Research Program (NCSRP), United Soybean Board (USB) and state soybean promotion boards, and partners in the private sector, including BASF, Bayer, Growmark, Corteva Agriscience, Syngenta and Winfield United.

Markell says the goal of The SCN Coalition's campaign is to have the entire industry speak with one voice in an effort to reduce the economic loss that soybean growers are facing from SCN. It starts with "Take the test. Beat the pest." Growers need to know their SCN numbers, and that starts by testing their fields so they know what their nematode populations are doing.

"SCN is North America's top yield-limiting pest in soybeans. Unfortunately, [research](#) shows SCN populations are adapting and reproducing on PI 88788, the source of resistance used in 95 percent of all SCN-resistant varieties, and yields are decreasing," he adds. "Most soybean growers are not aware that their yield loss is increasing. That's why we formed the Coalition."

Markell credits a small, diverse group of scientists who helped build The SCN Coalition and continue to lead it: Greg Tylka, Iowa State University nematologist; George Bird, Michigan State University nematologist; Albert Tenuta, Ontario Ministry of Agriculture, Food & Rural Affairs plant pathologist; Kaitlyn Bissonnette, University of Missouri plant pathologist; Ed Anderson, Iowa Soybean Association senior director of research and NCSRP executive director; and Palle Pedersen, global head product management at Syngenta Seedcare. He also cites MorganMyers, the strategic communications firm that helped Markell's team of scientists develop The SCN Coalition.

"Early success of the Coalition is the result of two main things," Markell says, "A great group of people who shared the same vision of success and have worked tirelessly to get there, and the support of the soybean growers and private corporate partners who believed we could make a national impact."

Before the Coalition launched, Markell’s team visited potential public and private partners to understand the positions that the industry and [academia](#) had on key SCN management recommendations. According to Markell, “Alignment was right there, and it was extremely encouraging.” Soon after, the Coalition equipped partners with messages, training and tools to raise grower awareness, and built [TheSCNCoalition.com](#), a one-stop shop for state-specific SCN resistance management recommendations.

The SCN Coalition was officially launched at Commodity Classic in 2018, with a panel of growers discussing how they actively manage SCN; a press conference announcing the Coalition and the research that led to its formation; and a booth staffed with nematologists and plant pathologists ready to “Talk Todes.”

“I’m proud of the approach we took to develop the Coalition, grounding it in [science](#), recruiting partners and working together toward unified messages. I’m very excited that our approach was recognized with a national Best of NAMA award,” Markell says. “But we’ve still got a lot of work to do.”

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Cutline: The SCN Coalition won a national [Best of NAMA Award](#) in 2019 for their public relations campaign.