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We're excited to introduce "Progress Through Sharing," iPiPE's brand-new newsletter featuring monthly updates on Crop-Pest Programs and other exciting iPiPE news. You can subscribe now by filling out the quick subscription form linked below.

Introductory blurb

Welcome to the first issue of iPiPE's monthly newsletter! iPiPE is a platform where growers, advisors and other professionals can share timely, actionable, unbiased and science-based information, including pest and beneficial organism observations and state-of-the-art weather and pest risk assessment model outputs, to improve plant health, productivity and economic returns.

As of 2018, iPiPE has supported 28 Crop-Pest Programs (CPPs) that unite extension professionals with undergraduate student interns to incentivize growers and consultants to submit observations on target and endemic pests by providing tools and information for timely management decisions. Survey results from iPiPE alumni show that students who were contemplating a career in agriculture before the iPiPE internship found their CPP a useful stepping stone on the path to achieving that ambition.

Subscribers can expect newsletter content that is driven by CPP activity and focuses on increasing awareness and interest for the iPiPE platform. Content will interest both advanced iPiPE users and readers who are new to iPiPE. In addition to monthly newsletters, iPiPE will organize webinars and feature articles made available to those who join the mailing list.

iPiPE's mission is to improve plant health, crop yields and enhance farm profitability; build local and regional capacities to detect and respond to crop pest problems; promote integrated pest management (IPM) practices to reduce adverse environmental effects; and enhance our nation's infrastructure to ensure a sustainable and secure food supply. To explore the iPiPE platform, visit:

<https://ipipe.zedxinc.com>.

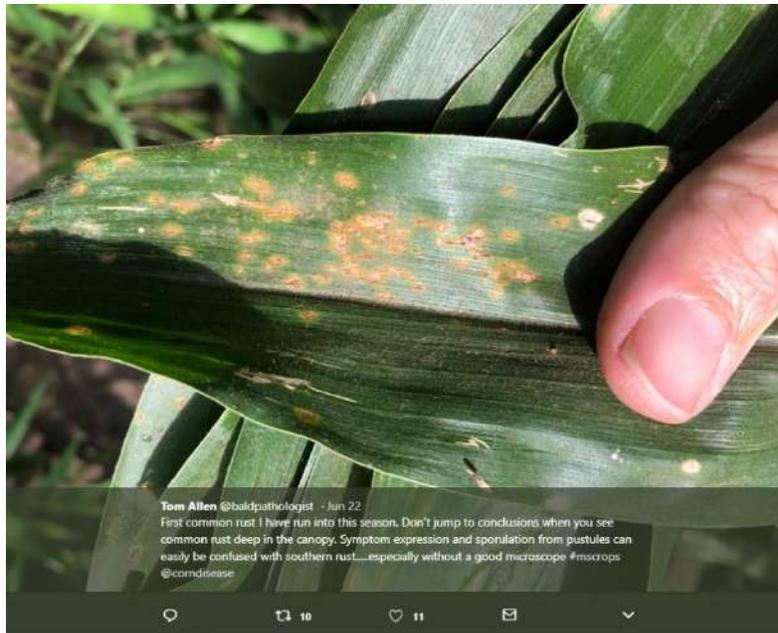
Keeping track of southern rust of corn using iPiPE and Twitter

Interns from University of Kentucky and Iowa State University participating in iPiPE's corn Crop-Pest Program (CPP) took up arms against southern rust, a fungal disease of corn, by leveraging the power of social media. Extension, university and industry specialists frequently utilize Twitter to share their work and observations. The students saw this as an opportunity to bridge their Twitter feed with iPiPE functionality.

They set up a new account under the name @corndisease in February 2016 and requested users to tweet or email photos of corn diseases with their location and the disease name. As the tweets rolled in, the group recorded each observation on iPiPE, taking care to flag unconfirmed posts as “suspect.” The Extension iPiPE site was used to create southern rust distribution maps that were shared via Twitter throughout the growing season. The team said, “the purpose was to explore the feasibility of providing farmers and crop consultants with an easily accessible, user-friendly, no-cost platform for sharing disease observations with rapid information transfer and early warning capabilities.”

The project, now nearly two-and-a-half years old, has built a community of well over a thousand followers who collectively post dozens of corn-disease observations weekly. These observations keep participating farmers, crop advisors, Extension and researchers abreast of where the disease is present, providing actionable information to optimize management and fungicide inputs.

[embed: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TG4aFVaMpCs&list=PLyDHx-rmZpClxBQQWMesNaqDnQrvNpHvk&index=40>]



Caption: “First common rust I have run into this season. Don’t jump to conclusions when you see common rust deep in the canopy. Symptom expression and sporulation from pustules can easily be confused with southern rust.....especially without a good microscope #mscrops @corndisease,” tweets Tom Allen (@baldpathologist).

future seasons and help guide management decisions for tree fruit growers in the Northeast, as well as demonstrate the feasibility of using automated traps.



Extension iPiPE site user-interface update

The iPiPE platform was launched for sharing observation and distribution maps and other information products, its creators have worked to continuously implement ongoing feedback from user polls taken annually. Positive response to the iPiPE Lite app's simplified mobile pest data collection encouraged the team to improve mobile and user friendliness on the iPiPE participant site as well. In April, those improvements went live with a comprehensive user-interface update featuring a modernized 'icon-based' look and feel.

The update began last year with a visual renovation of the site's popular mapping tool. Maps gained an export feature with an option to schedule automated map-update delivery to a user's inbox. Users are now greeted with a landing page that offers quick access to tools that include a new history tool with integrated downloading and filtering. A new sidebar makes information and tools more accessible and easily visible as icons.

Sponsorship from the USDA has kept the iPiPE platform open to the public and free of charge in exchange for user contribution of pest records to the database. To request an account and explore these exciting user interface updates, visit: <https://ipipe.zedxinc.com>.