Tar spot of corn – new disease in Michigan

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Suspected Tar spot of corn was found last week in a dry land Michigan corn field. We are currently working on official laboratory confirmation. In 2015 Tar spot was found in the US for the first time, in Indiana and Illinois. Given how late it has been found this season there should be little impact on yield, however we need to determine if it will be a threat in the future.

Keep an eye out for this disease as we approach harvest. Spore producing structures are produced by the Tar spot fungus on the leaves, and as the name suggests they resemble black spots of tar which feel bumpy to the touch and cannot be easily rubbed off.

If you suspect tar spot please submit a sample free of charge courtesy of the Corn Marketing Program of Michigan. To assist us in our research efforts submit samples to the MSU Diagnostic Services (www.pestid.msu.edu). When submitting samples be sure to indicate the location where the sample was collected.

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