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Sclerotinia stem rot (*Sclerotinia sclerotiorum*) of soybean: sowing dates and cultivar type for lower disease incidence in the Southeast of Buenos Aires (Argentina). Montoya, M, Clemente, G, Escande, A. EEA Balcarce INTA. Balcarce, Argentina. E-mail: mmontoya@balcarce.inta.gov.ar.

Sclerotinia sclerotiorum causes Sclerotinia stem rot (SSR) of soybean, causing significant economic losses**.** Earlier sowing dates (SD) and resistant cultivars, among others, are recommended to decrease SSR for the central area of Argentine soybean acreage. Higher inoculum pressure, conducive environment and increasing soybean area make the Southeast of Buenos Aires a risky scenario for SSR outbreaks. Our goals were to adjust SD as a control practice for this region and to assess cultivar reaction type to SSR. Six soybean cultivars from maturity groups III and IV were sown in three dates on *Sclerotinia*-infested field plots in INTA Balcarce from 2005 to 2007. The SD spanned the recommended period for this region: early, optimal and late SD were, respectively, on early November; late November, and middle December. Disease incidence (DI), and morphological-phenological data were registered, and meteorological variables, also considered.

The SD affected DI in 2005/06 and 2007/08. Highest final DI occurred in optimal SD in 2005/06 and 2007/08, and in late SD in 2006/07. Meteorological conditions from January to March during each season and flowering of cultivars explained SSR development in every SD. Cultivars also affected DI in the early and optimal SD when analyzed through seasons. High DI correlated positively to later flowering and days to maturity, more lodging and height. Sowings of early November or middle December allowed to escape to SSR in Balcarce. Also, certain morphological-phenological traits of cultivars tended to avoid SSR, reinforcing cultural practices as SD. **Financial Support**: INTA, Project PNCER2344.

Pathogen Group: fungus
Pathogen Species: *Sclerotinia sclerotiorum*
Host Species: *Glycine max*
Common Name of the Host: soybean