

Feature Story



Disease Forecasting

“What am I up against?” can be a tough question to answer as a grower. Crops face a variety of challenges, and with summer gearing up, the question gets pointed at mid-season disease.

Predicting disease potential begins by evaluating past weather conditions. Mild winters and cool, wet springs can foster hotbeds for disease. Nick Fassler, Technical Marketing Manager, BASF, says for many growers, this was the reality for the start of the season.

“We generally saw above average winter temperatures and plenty of spring rainfall,” said Fassler. “Growers who experienced these conditions can expect higher pressures from overwintering diseases like Septoria brown spot and frogeye leaf spot in soybeans or gray leaf spot and Northern corn leaf blight in corn.”

Geographic indicators can also be used to predict disease. Growers farther north have a distinct advantage of previewing disease outbreaks in the south, but more regionally, state-level monitoring is encouraged to help inform fungicide application decisions.

Local extension experts and neighboring growers can be excellent resources when identifying disease issues as they arise.

Growers may also be able to use sections of their own fields to gauge disease potential. Rain-fueled planting delays that occurred this spring has, in some cases, created notable gaps in crop development. This means that some corn plants planted ahead of the rest of the field, for example, may show symptoms of disease before the remainder of the crop, allowing additional time to react.

“No matter your situation, scouting will be essential for maintaining a healthy crop and properly timing fungicide applications,” said Fassler. “The best practice is to check fields weekly, and that means more than driving by. You’ll want evaluate on foot to get the closest look possible.”

For effective disease control, Fassler recommends growers make a Headline AMP® fungicide application at tassel in corn and Priaxor® fungicide application at the R3 growth stage in soybeans. Learn more by visiting www.agproducts.basf.us.

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