

EPA expands 'Apron' use

GREENSBORO, NC. — The Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) has expanded the registration of Apron, a Ciba-Geigy systemic fungicide seed dressing for control of systemic downy mildews and diseases caused by soilborne Pythium and Phytophthora, to include crops from sugar beets to sunflowers. The product at this time may be used only by commercial seed treaters.

The Apron 25W formulation is now registered for treatment of sunflower seeds, announced Tom McGowan, product group director of the Ciba-Geigy Corporation's Agricultural Division. "Sunflower growers now have an edge in keeping downy mildew losses to the minimum," he says.

"We are just tickled pink that Apron has been registered for sunflowers," says Larry Kleingartner of the National Sunflowers Association in Bismarck, N.D. "The major disease problem in the sunflower industry is downy mildew and seed treatment is the only method we

have to prevent it."

Downy mildew infects the roots of sunflower plants during the first week or two after planting. "Without Apron seed treatment, we come up with a stunted plant that doesn't produce anything," Kleingartner says.

During the 1985 growing season, about 80 percent of all North Dakota sunflower fields surveyed had some downy mildew. In 16 percent of 128 fields surveyed in 11 counties, infection exceeded 10 percent, the rate at which yield losses occur, Kleingartner says.

"The average infection in these fields was 34 percent—which shows there were significant yield losses. Since North Dakota produces about 80 percent of the nation's sunflower crop, these losses have a big economic impact on the industry," he says. "But now growers will be able to use Apron seed treatment—an inexpensive, effective product—to reduce these losses."

Apron 25W is also now registered for Pythium damping-off in garden

beets (including sugar beets), bentgrass, fescues for turf, sorghum and two additional grain crops—millet and buckwheat. In addition, a higher rate can now be used on peas for control of Pythium damping-off and systemic downy mildew.

Previously, Apron 25W was labeled for Pythium seed rot and damping-off in cotton; Pythium damping-off and early-season Phytophthora control in soybeans and forage legumes; Pythium damping-off in grain crops; Pythium damping-off and early season Phytophthora in seed and pod vegetables; Pythium damping-off control on golf courses and home lawns in ryegrass; and Pythium damping-off control in forage grasses.

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Soil conservation saved

2.2 million tons last year

HARRISBURG — Soil conservation efforts in Pennsylvania in 1985 resulted in the saving of 2.2 million tons of soil, reports a federal conservation official.

James Olson, state conservationist for the USDA Soil Conservation Service, notes that this is an increase over the 1984 soil loss reduction of 1.9 million tons. "We are making progress, but we have a long way to assure the preservation of the state's fertile farmland," added Olson. According to the Pennsylvania Natural Resources Inventory published in 1985, sheet and rill soil erosion totals 84 million tons per year. Gully, roadbank, and streambank erosion add another 40 million tons annually. This brings the state's total annual soil loss to over 120 million tons per year.

Olson stated that the Soil Con-

servation Service (SCS) provided help to over 24,000 land users in 1985. Fifty-nine percent, or 14,400, applied soil saving practices. A total of 1,429 communities were also aided with soil and water management problems.

Among the practices applied during the past year were 277,300 acres of contour strip cropping, 601,000 feet of diversions, 385,000 feet of terraces, and 326 agricultural waste management systems. These practices were applied on 265,300 acres of land in the Commonwealth.

SCS provides technical help to farmers and other land users through county conservation districts. Conservation districts operate in all Pennsylvania counties except Philadelphia. The USDA Soil Conservation Service is responsible for the protection of the soil and water resources on the nation's private lands.

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