

Tobacco Blue Mold Update

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At this time, blue mold has not been found on tobacco in Pennsylvania, but it has been reported in Kentucky, Ohio, and Florida. The blue mold in these states is both sensitive and insensitive to Ridomil. In other words, Ridomil has controlled blue mold in some cases, but in other cases has not controlled the blue mold.

This means there are two types of blue mold in these states. We

think our blue mold starts from spores blown in from the Kentucky area on storm fronts. If this is the case this year, we probably will soon see blue mold infections on tobacco in Pennsylvania.

Since we cannot predict which blue mold strain might infect our tobacco, our recommendation is to apply two quarts of Ridomil prior to transplanting. If we only get the Ridomil sensitive blue mold, you will have protection for the season.

With the help of The Pennsylvania Department of Agriculture,

EPA has granted a Section 18 Emergency Exemption for Acrobat MZ fungicide for use on blue mold that is not controlled by Rimodil. If we determine blue mold is not being controlled by Ridomil, Acrobat MZ will be recommended.

Acrobat MZ wettable powder is an American Cyanamid Company product. This material will have to be sprayed foliar with a maximum of four field applications for the season. Unlike the maneb products, Acrobat MZ will stop the blue mold from making additional spores which should reduce potential new infections.

Application rates and methods will be on the label. In addition, a Pennsylvania Section 18 record-keeping form must be obtained. This form must be filled out and mailed to the Pennsylvania

Department of Agriculture within 30 days after the last application.

These forms can be obtained from PDA, Penn State extension offices, and where you purchase the material.

One last tip to help control tobacco blue mold in Pennsylvania — destroy those plant beds as soon as you are finished pulling plants. Plant beds provide a great environment for the development of blue mold, which then can spread to the field through airborne spores.

Observation and timely action will be necessary to prevent tobacco blue mold from reducing the

value of our Pennsylvania grown tobacco. Look for yellow spots with a bluish mold growing on the underside of the spot.

The best time to see the mold on the underside of the leaf is early in the morning or on cloudy days. Look at your plant beds and walk your fields frequently, looking for the fungus.

If you find blue mold, please contact me at 653-4728 or contact Bob Anderson, Lancaster County extension office, at (717) 394-6851 so we can determine what blue mold strain we have and what recommendations we need to make for all tobacco producers.

Potato Growers Support Continued Research

HARRISBURG (Dauphin Co.) — Agriculture Secretary Charles C. Brosius announced that Pennsylvania's potato growers voted to continue the Pennsylvania Potato Research Program for another five years.

"The program funds research for the discovery of new potato varieties and works to find solutions to production problems," Brosius said. "By continuing the program, we will be able to support and expand the efforts of Pennsylvania's potato farmers."

Of the eligible growers, 55 percent voted in favor of continuing the program for the next five

years. A total of 116 eligible votes were cast.

Those voting in the referendum represent 56 percent of the 208 eligible potato growers in the Commonwealth. A potato grower must farm at least five acres to be considered eligible. The program is funded by potato growers through a \$4 per acre assessment on their production.

The Agricultural Commodities Marketing Act of 1968 created programs such as the Potato Research Program. The Act requires the program to be reviewed every five years by a referendum of potato growers.

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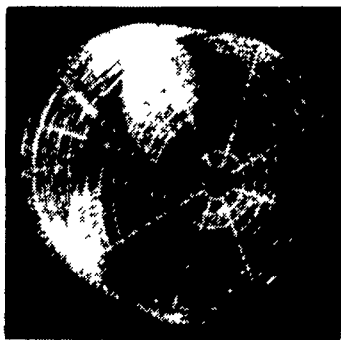
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