

KDA Action Enables Farmers To Fight Wheat Blight

FRANKFORT, KY.

Quick action by Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer and Kentucky Department of Agriculture staff has provided Kentucky farmers a key weapon in the fight against fusarium head blight in winter wheat.

The U.S. Environmental Protection Agency on Wednesday approved a crisis exemption allowing Kentucky farmers to apply Folicur 3.6F from May 1 through May 15. Folicur 3.6F is a fungicide produced by Bayer CropSciences.

“Our Division of Environmental Services took a proactive approach to get this crisis exemption for our wheat growers,” Agriculture Commissioner Richie Farmer said. “Thanks to their quick work, our growers will be able to apply this product as their wheat is heading, when it’s important to suppress fusarium head blight. By being able to use this product, our farmers will save at least \$5 an acre, plus they will be able to save their wheat crop, which they badly need after the damage done by last

year’s spring freeze.”

The crisis exemption limits farmers to a single application of the fungicide at a rate of 4 fluid ounces per acre. The product is not to be applied within 30 days of harvest.

The Kentucky Department of Agriculture declared a crisis exemption on Wednesday to allow use of Folicur 3.6F on winter wheat. EPA approved the declaration later in the day.

Kentucky farmers planted an estimated 560,000 acres of winter wheat last fall, the highest number of acres seeded to wheat in four years, according to the Kentucky office of the National Agricultural Statistics Service. The freeze-damaged 20-07 crop yielded 49 bushels of wheat per acre, down from a record 71 bushels in 2006. Kentucky farmers harvested 12.3 million bushels of wheat valued at \$70.4 million in 2007, compared with 22.7 million bushels valued at \$78.4 million the previous year. Δ