

To Spray Or Not To Spray

Risk Factors For Your Corn

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Do your research before you spray your corn with fungicides. This is the stand of University of Illinois assistant professor Carl Bradley.

Bradley, an assistant professor of plant pathology says, "Take a look at the risk factors and disease observations before you book a plane and tell it to go spray your crops."

"My estimate is that roughly between 2 to 4 million acres of corn was sprayed in Illinois last year. I think a lot of these fungicide applications were based on trying to get higher yielding corn. I don't think they were probably warranted in all situations especially, with the dryness that we had in the southern part of the state," said Bradley.

"Some risk factors for corn are things like your previous crop," said Bradley, "If you have a corn on corn situation, most of the foliar diseases are

in the debris of the last years crop, so your risk for disease goes up."

"There is a range of different hybrids that we can purchase and if we go for one that has more yield potential it might not have the disease resistance that you would need, this also is a risk factor," said Bradley.

"Weather is also a central factor for disease," said Bradley, "The southern portion of the state was very dry last year up through the end of June. Because of this, we really didn't see much disease out there."

"Weather things like rainfall and humidity are important," said Bradley, "Wet leaves are important for fungal infections and disease spread. Planting dates are also important. There has been some research shown that corn planted later may be more susceptible to some foliar diseases then corn planted earlier."

"If you add all these things up that would put you in more of a situation where a fungicide may be warranted," said Bradley. Δ

**University of Illinois
Assistant Professor Carl Bradley
advises producers
to do their research before
spraying their corn with fungicides.**

Photo by John LaRose, Jr.

