

# Use Fungicides Wisely

*Hold The Spray Until Economic Thresholds Appear, Bradley Says*

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It isn't always economical to spray corn with fungicides, according to Carl Bradley extension plant pathologist University of Illinois. Bradley spoke at the 42nd Annual Belleville Field Day.

"This is really based on a lot of the spring activity that occurred last year on corn," he explained.

There was a lot of corn sprayed with fungicide last year throughout the Midwest and Bradley presented some of the data, in an effort to help farmers make decisions for this year.

"One of the things that I'm showing is that fungicides do not pay in every case that they were sprayed," he said. "Part of the reason for that is that fungicides should be used to control diseases. We had a lot of dry area in the southern third of Illinois last year and that's where we didn't see quite as good a response with the fungicide. In northern Illinois we did have a

pretty decent response with foliar fungicides because of all the rain there. The rain also brings good conditions for foliar diseases and that's when these fungicides offer good control."

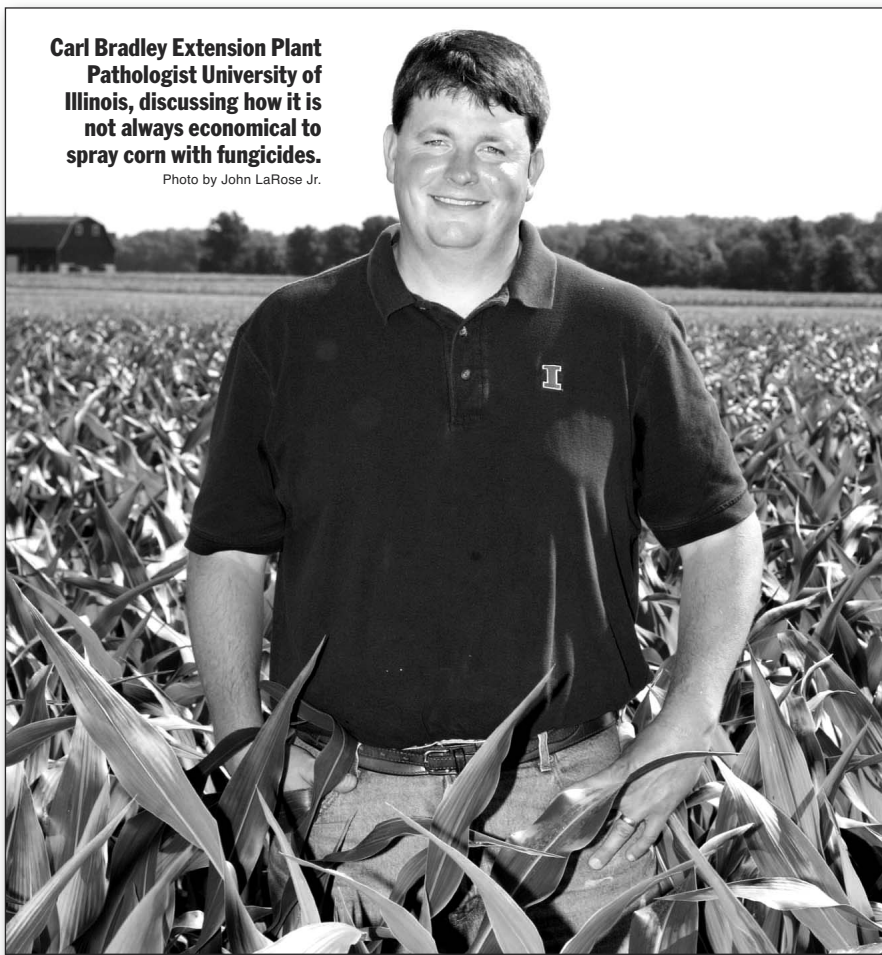
Bradley helped those in attendance visualize some risk factors to help them decide when they might need to spray a fungicide. The risk factors include planting corn on corn, or using a hybrid that more susceptible to foliar diseases.

"The number one thing is that we need to continue to focus on IPM somewhat," he said. "Prophylactic spraying of every field is probably not

the best, for several reasons. One reason might be that it's going to be an economic loss for yourself if you don't get a return for the use of that fungicide; then there's other biological reasons why we don't want to spray something when it isn't needed. We need to still consider IPM and consider disease observations, go out and scout, and think about some of the risk factors I talked about to help you decide."

**Carl Bradley Extension Plant Pathologist University of Illinois, discussing how it is not always economical to spray corn with fungicides.**

Photo by John LaRose Jr.



IPM, or Integrated Pest Management is based on thresholds. You don't need to apply an insecticide or fungicide until the pest reaches a certain threshold.

"That's what we need to think about," Bradley explained. "If we're not seeing any diseases out there then we don't necessarily need to spray for it. Using some of those risk factors and disease observations to help make the decision of whether to spray will help out in the long run in your pocketbook as well." △