

AGRICULTURAL BEET

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Cercospora Leafspot Update

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2019 CLS: A midseason assessment

If you are like me, the 2019 season might be starting to remind you a bit of a segment on a popular TV show of the 1970s and 1980's featuring two farmers crooning about the absence of a familiar acquaintance of theirs. These same sentiments are being echoed by SMBSC farmers this season regarding the notable absence of a familiar adversary. So, the question remains, what has happened to CLS so far this summer? A few of the more plausible explanations include the influence of the severity and length of last winter, and/or the late spring planting date as it relates to relative crop maturity (compared to calendar date) as well as delayed canopy formation. However, at this particular juncture the answer to these questions may not be as important as are the implications relating to what we plan to do going forward from here.



We are aware of deliberations over whether this is the right time or opportunity to expand your “calendar-dollar” by stretching spray intervals. Further, we are mindful of the considerable variation in crop potential across the co-op. Therefore, rather than taking a hard stance on this particular strategy, we would like to provide a few important considerations to ponder for anyone who may be contemplating this course of action.

- **Effort:** Low CLS levels are a credit to extraordinary efforts of shareholders thus far. Don't lose it now.
- **CLS:** It may not be prevalent but can now be found with relative ease. ***Do not underestimate!***
- **Weather:** Although we've been enjoying dry conditions with moderate temps for our corn pollination period, we still have ample soil moisture and moist intra-canopy conditions capable of allowing for the slow and constant progression of the disease and should avoid the temptation for complacency.
- **Calendar:** It may seem like we are deep into summer but the reality is we are only 6 weeks past the initiation of our CLS fungicide program of late June. This means that we are realistically only about halfway home if we consider our goal of keeping fields clean into mid to late - September.
- **Reality:** With all the existing crop scenarios, some shareholders will be looking for the opportunity to lengthen intervals. For those who are contemplating this plan, here are a few details to consider...
 - It is critical to continue to acknowledge the ongoing processes involving the aging of earlier developed leaves as well as the creation of new ones. Both of which need protection.
 - Therefore if extending, limit the extent of stretching intervals to no more than 14 days.
 - Strategies that involve altering spray intervals must not be allowed to exist in a vacuum of information. This means that any attempts to lengthen intervals must include both regular and detailed crop scouting for disease progression to avoid loss of control.
 - We have experienced significant challenges this season that have tested our resolve but we must remain diligent in order to allow for and protect maximum obtainable cooperative ESA.

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