

AGRICULTURAL BEET

June 18th, 2021

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2021: Maintaining the Momentum

To make an early CLS fungicide application in 2021 or not to make...., that is the question.

Whether tis more strategic in the mind to delay in the interest of conserving crop protection dollars due to droughty conditions, or to take up arms against an unseen enemy and by opposing them, to conquer them.

Please excuse my attempt at poetic prose to describe this important impending decision. However, in many ways, this Shakespearean statement does describe our decision-making process relating to fungicide program initiation over the week as our sugarbeet crop continues to canopy even in the relative absence of measureable rainfall.

I have had an opportunity to speak with a considerable cross section of SMBSC shareholders about this particular question and to be certain..., there is no fool-proof or undeniable answer to this age-old question. However, closer examination can reveal a couple of notable certainties regarding this rather uncertain agronomic question...

- When it comes to CLS infections at SMBSC and fungicide program initiation in 2021 there is not likely an answer that is 100% correct. Rather, answers likely reside on a sliding curve of relative level of “correctness”.
- It relates to a Risk : Benefit ratio. An EBDC [0] application costs up to \$10 / acre. Whereas, permitting CLS to gain a foothold in your field permitting late season infections to reach Category 5 has proven to result in a more than \$300 per acre penalty to the grower beet payment in root yield and quality. I’ll take those odds every day.

Ultimately, data suggest that greatest risk lies in delay of fungicide applications beyond established known “triggers”...

1. When first leaves to touch in the canopy are still 3” to 4” apart.
2. And when sugarbeet 34 degree base-temp GDU’s reach the 1500 to 1700 level (one week span).

For many of our SMBSC fields, both triggers appear to point toward a **June 16th - June 24th start** depending upon your specific planting date.

The 2-year relationship of sugar production (Revenue) and CLS severity to program initiation is striking (see 2019 and 2020 graphs at right). Regardless of late planting in 2019 or early planting in 2020, the story ends the same way... an earlier program initiation pays off. This is the precise reasoning behind developing the recommendation for a naked application of an EBDC alone to provide the security of a protectant fungicide without breaking the bank. Further, for those who are concerned about “wasting” a mode of action in dry conditions..., if dry weather persists, there should be opportunity to adjust intervals to gain days back. For more information, please view the series on CLS control BMPs at <https://www.smbcsc.com/Agronomy/CLS/CLSDefault.aspx>.

