

Alfalfa Growers Armed with New Disease Control Options

BASF

Alfalfa growers now have another tool available for disease control.

The prevailing plan of action for growers who find signs of disease in their alfalfa fields has long been through cutting management – adapting harvest timing to preempt the spread of disease. But changing the cutting time can result in lower quality alfalfa hay.

The problem is one BASF is addressing for the first time this season by adding alfalfa to the Headline® fungicide label.

“There are plenty of leaf diseases that affect alfalfa and cutting management has usually been used to keep them in check,” said Gery Welker, Tech Service Representative, BASF. “You’re out scouting and see some things you don’t like and say ‘Oh, I better cut this, because I’m going to lose tonnage, quality, etc.’ When you cut early it can help control disease, but it doesn’t necessarily produce the best alfalfa hay.”

Headline fungicide provides growers with superior disease control and Plant Health benefits, including improved growth efficiency, excellent disease control, and enhanced tolerance to stress conditions such as drought, heat, and cold temperatures. Headline is used to protect more than 90 crops including corn, soybeans, and wheat and controls more than 50 diseases.

Growers looking to more intensively manage their alfalfa acres can now scout their fields for disease and spray Headline to stop the disease from spreading. Headline keeps the plant healthier, potentially resulting in a higher quality crop at cutting. If sprayed at the onset of disease, Headline can prevent fungal pathogens from causing new infections. Ideally, Welker said growers should begin scouting for disease once the crop is 6” tall and has canopied, since this timing provides the ideal environment for fungus growth.

“If a grower applies Headline at the beginning of an alfalfa stand’s lifecycle, hopefully it will stretch the length of time that field is productive,” Welker said. “That’s a really great return on investment.”

It is labeled for control of diseases such as anthracnose, rust, spring and summer black stem and leaf spot, common leaf spot, powdery mildew, yellow leaf blotch, stemphyllium leaf spot, downy mildew, rhizoctonia blight/black patch, and stagonospora leaf spot.

“Progressive growers are hungry for something new,” Welker said. “When they solve, prevent or diminish disease impact with cutting management alone, they are not ending up with the quality they want. This is particularly a concern for those providing hay to dairy operations, where hay quality can affect milk production.”

For information on Headline fungicide, visit www.Headlinefungicide.com