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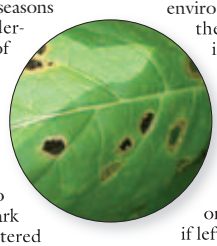
to target spot; however, different varieties may develop more serious symptoms than others. In 2005, Virginia researchers found that, in general, varieties like KY 14×L8, NC BH 129 and NC 2000 developed less target spot than NC 5, NC 7 and KT 204. Keep in mind, though, that disease in the less susceptible varieties was still fairly high, and that these data represent only a few tests conducted in one year. Additional tests carried out over several environments and seasons are needed to better understand the susceptibilities of different burley varieties to target spot.



FUNGICIDE LABELED

Until recently, a fungicide option to manage target spot was not available to producers of burley and dark tobacco. Fungicides registered for use on tobacco prior to 2006 did not list target spot on their labels and gave, at best, mediocre control of the disease.

The recent labeling of Quadris 2.08SC, however, has provided growers with an effective tool that can be used along with cultural practices to reduce losses to target spot.

In tests conducted over several years around the Southeast, Quadris has reduced target spot on burley tobacco by as much as 75% compared to untreated tobacco, and control has been greater in some cases. The application rate is 6 to 12 fluid ounces per acre. Higher rates are more effective where disease pressure is high or on older, larger tobacco.

Quadris can be applied from transplanting up to the day of harvest, but only four applications can be made per season, and no more than two consecutive applications are permitted.

Quadris is a locally systemic fungicide, so complete coverage is necessary to achieve good control of disease. Over-the-top applications are feasible when tobacco is small, but directed applications made with drop extensions will be required for tobacco over 30 inches tall. Remember to increase spray volume and rate as the tobacco increases in size to get good coverage of leaf surfaces.

In many cases, late-season losses are caused by target spot that begins early in the season. Getting a handle on the disease when it first appears will go a long way toward reducing severity and lost yield at harvest. Waiting until the disease is fairly severe before taking action will lead to greater losses, and it will be more difficult to get good coverage on tobacco once it reaches the topping stage and beyond. Early application of Quadris is the key to success and may be more important than the number of treatments made.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Research conducted in 2005 and 2006 suggests that where target spot has been severe in the past, the first application of Quadris should be made before the crop covers the row middles. The reason is that once this stage is reached, the environment in the lower part of the canopy becomes increasingly favorable to target spot. Relatively small numbers of target spot lesions on lower leaves can produce a tremendous quantity of spores in the humid lower canopy, and disease can "explode" during periods of overcast or rainy weather after topping if left unchecked.

Refer to the accompanying chart for a summary of testing Quadris for target spot control in 2006. In this test, one application of Quadris made at 8 fluid ounces per acre five weeks after transplanting, or two applications made at five and seven weeks after transplanting were as effective in reducing target spot as three applications beginning five weeks after transplanting and continuing on a 14-day schedule up to topping.

All Quadris treatments offered good disease control and performed better than a standard treatment of Dithane tank-mixed with Forum (flowable formulation of dimethomorph, the active ingredient in Acrobat) applied three times.

In cases where the first application of Quadris is made later in the season to manage target spot, growers can still expect reasonable disease control. However, as mentioned earlier, good coverage becomes more difficult to achieve as the crop increases in size, plus the risk of rapid — and potentially uncontrollable — disease development exists.

Trials for managing target spot in Kentucky have shown that spray programs with Quadris generally yield better in terms of weight and quality than untreated tobacco or tobacco treated solely with Dithane DF + Acrobat or Actigard.

Target spot is not a problem in every field, but if it has been severe in a field in the past, there's a good chance it will cause problems again. An integrated management program that balances crop rotation, wider plant spacing, and a fungicide program that features one or two early applications of Quadris will provide good control of target spot, as well as diseases like blue mold and frogeye.