

Protecting BMR Corn from Foliar Disease

Overview

If foliar diseases threaten brown midrib corn (BMR) silage fields, growers can mitigate risks under the right circumstances with proactive management.

What you should know

- Generally, hybrids that are more susceptible to fungal diseases will have a greater response to a foliar fungicide. Check the hybrid's profile for susceptibility to common leaf diseases.
- Because many foliar pathogens survive in corn residue on the soil surface, the risk of disease increases when corn is planted into the same field for consecutive years.
- Areas with high disease pressure and fields with low areas or those bordered by trees are more susceptible to foliar diseases.
- Rain and humidity create an environment for foliar disease development. Hot and dry conditions can suppress disease growth.
- Fungicide treatments on BMR silage are most effective when disease pressure is moderate to severe. Remember that fungicides will only treat fungal diseases and not bacterial ones.

Action steps

1. **Observe indicators:** Gray leaf spot produces tan lesions with a grayish cast. Northern corn leaf blight can be identified by grayish-green cylinders that reach up to 15 centimeters in length. Eyespot appears as dark brown, circular lesions with a diameter of $\frac{1}{8}$ of an inch.
2. **Scout fields prior to tasseling:** Count the number of plants with a specific disease present as a percentage of the total number of plants assessed. Disease-related damage at harvest depends on weather between fungicide application and harvest.
3. **Determine use of fungicides:** If at least 50% of susceptible hybrids are showing fungal disease symptoms, consider applying a fungicide. Fungicides generally are not recommended for resistant hybrids.



Virtually all tasseled hybrids are threatened by foliar diseases, with risk varying in each field.



30-Second Summary

- Foliar pathogens can be a costly threat to BMR corn.
- Minimize risk of foliar diseases with smart management, considering weather conditions and tracking field history.
- Scout before tasseling to determine if fungicide is warranted.

NOTES:

For more information, contact:



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