



Avicta Labeled For Corn Nematodes

Nematodes are a known menace in cotton and soybeans, and increasingly they are becoming a problem in corn. A new seed treatment may offer some relief for corn farmers.

Avicta, from Syngenta, was recently approved by the EPA and will be available in limited quantities in 2009. It is a pre-applied seed treatment package with a .50 milligram active ingredient rate of Cruiser (Cruiser 500) plus Apron XL, Maxim XL and Dynasty fungicides.

In a press release, Syngenta said 2009 supplies of Avicta-treated hybrids mainly would be used in on-farm test demonstrations. Full commercial launch is set for 2010.

Avicta has been used in cotton since 2006. "Avicta has a track record of success in cotton and it took the market away from Temik," says Mark Jirak, crop manager for Syngenta Seed Care.

Avicta adds an easy-to-use and low-cost way to control nematodes on hybrids that have Bt traits to control primary insects such as rootworm and European corn borer. Cruiser or Poncho control secondary insects. "It is very compatible with other [seed-applied] fungicides and insecticides," says Jirak. "It has yet to be tested with inoculants."

Avicta protects the first three to six weeks. He says as the first corn roots grow out of the seed, they

pick up enough Avicta to control nematodes for the first few weeks of the plant's life. "The product is not systemic, and only the first roots are protected," says Jirak. "We only need early season activity to be effective. After the first four weeks, corn root growth outpaces nematode damage."

The active ingredient abamectin is a nervous-system toxin. "Whether a pest ingests or comes in contact with the chemical, it paralyzes the pest and kills the nematode immediately upon contact and doesn't allow the nematode to feed or reproduce," explains Jirak. In side-by-side tests, he says Avicta averaged a 7.5-bushel-per-acre advantage over non-treated seed.

Syngenta found Avicta has efficacy on 10 parasitic nematodes that feed on corn roots. They include lesion, sting, dagger, stunt, spiral, needle, stubby root, lance, root knot and pin. The company has tested the seed treatment under heavy nematode pressure in comparison with Counter, with equal or better results, says Jirak.

He says Syngenta mapped nematode presence by taking soil samples from 25,000 acres of corn across the Corn Belt. They found nematodes are always in cornfields to some degree, with at least two species causing damage.

Terry Niblack, University of Illinois nematologist, says growers should be soil sampling to find out which corn nematodes occur in a particular field and at what population.

"All corn fields have plant-parasitic nematodes, but that doesn't mean all cornfields are at risk for nematode injury," she says. "Management decisions must be based on sampling."

At press time, Syngenta had not released cost figures, nor does it have a list of seed brands that will be treated with Avicta in 2009.

Jirak adds that Syngenta is pursuing registration of Avicta on soybeans and expects approval in 2011.

—Daniel Davidson

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