How to maximize your fungicide purchases

COMPARISON SHOP YOUR FUNGICIDE PURCHASES BY COMPUTING THE COST PER OUNCE, COST PER DAY AND TOTAL APPLICATION COSTS

With maintenance budgets under pressure, fungicide purchases can be a major factor in a golf course maintenance program. Often, superintendents or their purchasing agents consider the case, bag or unit price to determine which product is the most economical to use. Getting the most for your money requires a range of considerations.

Use vendor price lists to simplify comparisons

One way to comparatively shop fungicides is to distribute a price list for vendors to submit to you. In putting a price list together simply list the product name, an estimate of the number of units you will need for the coming year and an estimated delivery date. Giving the vendor a delivery date allows them to consider delivering the product through their own trucking schedule, which can save you commercial shipping costs. Because shipping costs add up very quickly be sure to note whether the vendor’s price includes shipping, and also ask for a copy of their shipping policy. Organizing delivery dates will ensure products will be on hand when you need them and keep your inventory down.

Your bid list should also include the quantity per unit. For example, one vendor may give you a price for Banner Maxx per 2-gallon case while another may give you a price per gallon. Being specific will cut down on confusion and ensure you are getting an apples-to-apples comparison. An example bid list can be found in Table 1.

You may also include a letter or a note on the sheet to encourage any special financing available and a copy of their payment policy.

Traditionally fungicide prices are in vendors hands in November for the following year. This allows you to send out the bid list in November with a request for responses by mid-January and have time for questions and budget considerations.

The chemical group a fungicide belongs to is defined by its mode of action on a fungus. There may be differences among products in a particular group. However, all products in that group will attack the fungus in the same manner. For this reason, the differences between products within the same chemical group are usually agronomically insignificant. For example, the fungal group of Dithiocarbamates includes the active ingredients Mancozeb, Maneb and Thiram. The trade names of products with these active ingredients include Fore, Dithane, Manex, Spotrete 75 and Thramed. When forming your price list be sure to consider the other products are within the same chemical group. This will give you the ability to not only compare vendor prices, but prices among several manufacturers as well.

Having the unit prices from your vendors is one element of the equation. Other considerations include:

- Past performance of the fungicide
- How long will the fungicide control the pathogen once applied to the turf
- What the fungicide controls
- What rotation will be required to insure resistance does not occur

Computing the cost per ounce price

After you have the cost of the product containers you should convert the price to a cost per ounce basis. For example, Curlan/Touche comes in 11-ounce soluble containers, four to a pack and four packs in a case – giving you a total of 176 ounces per case (11 oz x 4 x 4 = 176 ounces). Now, take the total price per case and divide it by the total ounces in the case. (Price / 176 ounces = cost per ounce). This will give you the cost of the product per ounce. Once you found the price per ounce you are ready to begin to compare the other factors in the cost equation.

Consider the effect of application intervals

Fungicide labels specify recommended application intervals based on how long the fungicide can be expected to control the pathogen and thus when the next application should be made. However, the actual application interval can vary by area and is dependent on heat, humidity and other environmental conditions. Look at the application interval as a guide in your consideration.

A key element when looking at the application interval is how long is the fungicide likely to control a particular pathogen. For example, compare two different fungicides/active ingredients used to control brown patch: Mancozeb (Fore, Dithane) and Vinclozolin (Touche, Vorlan, Curlan). Products with Mancozeb as the active ingredient will give seven days of control before the next application is needed, according to the label. Products with the active ingredient Vinclozolin need to be applied every 14 to 28 days depend-
your plants a biological boost. Healthy start. Give your new landscape plantings a nurture plant roots. Use Tree Saver to Mycorrhizal fungi will colonize and project is Tree Saver will give however your planting is... Tree Saver will give your plants a biological boost. Mycorrhizal fungi will colonize and nurture plant roots. Use Tree Saver to give your new landscape plantings a healthy start.

### TABLE 1.

#### EXAMPLE BID LIST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Size</th>
<th>Approximate Delivery Date</th>
<th>Projected Min. Quantity Needed</th>
<th>Unit Price</th>
<th>Total Price</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Heritage</td>
<td>1 lb</td>
<td>May 30, 2003</td>
<td>1</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Signature</td>
<td>4 x 5.5 lb</td>
<td>May 30, 2003</td>
<td>4</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Manicure or Daconil</td>
<td>2 x 2.5 gal</td>
<td>May 30, 2003</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Touche or Curlan</td>
<td>11ozx4x4</td>
<td>April 1, 2003</td>
<td>2</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Introduce the fertility partners of the forest floor into your landscape plantings for thriving, long-lasting trees and shrubs.

**TABLE 2.**

#### CALCULATING FUNGICIDE COST PER DAY OF CONTROL

\[
\text{Cost Per Day of Control} = \frac{\text{Application Rate oz/1,000} \times \text{Cost/oz}}{\text{Application Interval in days}}
\]

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Product</th>
<th>Application Rate oz/1,000</th>
<th>Cost/oz</th>
<th>Application Interval in days</th>
<th>Cost Per Day of Control</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mancozeb</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>$0.40</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>$0.23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vinclozolin</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>$1.70</td>
<td>21</td>
<td>$0.08</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Cost of Mancozeb is based on a 768 oz case at $306.00 Vinclozolin based on a 176 oz case at $299.75

**Conclusion**

Putting all of these factors and techniques together will ensure you have all of the information you will need to make an effective evaluation of the prices among vendors and products. Setting up delivery dates, knowing the actual application costs of products in advance and ensuring they are an available when needed, and executing an efficient fungal program will make the most of your purchase decision.

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