

C-15 — SOME THOUGHTS

About a month ago, after a winter passed without dealing with the C-15 dilemma, my thoughts naturally started leaning toward how to deal with the problem this spring. Much has been stated about the "do's and don'ts" of C-15 management - and with the much awaited visit from Dr. Houston Couch, who heads up the GCSAA appointed team to find a solution - Spring is here and gone! Dr. Couch has made a visit to Chicago with some very interesting news a possible solution. However, we superintendents who have this so-called "red leaf" now must still deal with it until the appointed team finalizes its analysis.

Last July at the Medinah Country Club MAGCS meeting, many possible management practices and/or cures were discussed.

Fungicide Application: Many different tank mixtures were discussed from heavy weekly applications of Dacomil and Acti-dionne TGF, to going back to the possible use of mercuries. The possibility of Stripe Smut and heavy rates of 3336 or 1991 drenched in was mentioned as a cure. And finally, cool weather Pythium and the use of DuPont SP was recommended by one individual.

Fertilization: C-15 requires more nitrogen! Anybody knows that! Also Ph could be a factor, sulfur applications, gypsum, and the use of fertilizers with sulfur added. Iron and micro-nutrients added weekly to the spray tank certainly wouldn't hurt. All through this part of the discussion my thoughts keep going back to "some" recommendations that green greens are not necessarily good greens and that low N produces stiffer upright leaves for a smoother and tighter putting surface.

Cultural Practices - C-15 under stress will not survive vigorous cultural control such as verti-cutting, aerification, brushing, or combing. Also, one wise experienced superintendent told me once that C-15 does not like heavy top-dressing. The possibility of overseeding with other bents should be initiated immediately.

Drainage and Irrigation were mentioned and everyone naturally agreed that proper use of both is mandatory.

Now - Dr. Couch has made his report to the Chicago area and has some very encouraging news. To review his findings to date:

1. The dying out of C-15 in the Chicago area was not red leaf spot, cool weather Pythium, nor was the disease incited by parasitic nematodes.

2. The disease is primarily in the roots and possibly crowns of the plants.

3. Soil Ph has a factor on all fertilization practices, but it in itself is not the cause of the dying-out of C-15.

4. There is no relationship between either manufacturer or analysis of fertilizer used and the development of the disease.

5. There is no relationship between types or amounts of pesticides used and the occurrence of the C-15 dying-out.

6. The disease hits C-15, but only C-15 which is growing under certain stress conditions. They are: 1. high soil moisture, 2. low air temperatures, 3. high radiant energy, and 4. low cutting heights. Another factor that seems to contribute to the development is **iron deficiency**.

Dr. Couch seems to think "the disease" is "procar-yote." Procaryote is a primitive bacteria-like organism. If found to be the pest, we could be spraying with antibiotics. We with the C-15 problem are all anxiously awaiting the final conclusion.

But for now, what maintenance practices should we follow. We can raise the height of cut, add sufficient iron to the spray tank mix, try not to disturb the sick grass by mechanical abuse, and just generally follow sound maintenance practices.

I remember last fall when we were experimenting with one particular green at Hillcrest. We had raised the height of cut, applied additional fertilizer, and quit brushing. A concerned number walked over to me after putting out on the green and asked what we had done to this green. After downheartedly trying to explain the "C-15 red leaf problem", and why the green wasn't as fast and short as the others, he looked at me and said, "Gee, do you think we could make them all like this one?"

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