

TURF TALK BY Dr. Ward C. Stienstra

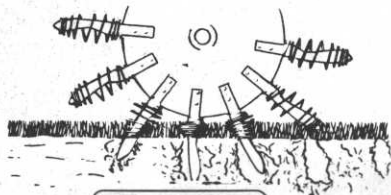
Department of Plant Pathology
Institute of Agriculture

Preventive pest control treatments i.e. application of control chemicals prior to presence of the pest is under study by an advisory committee of FIFRA. The concern was that chemicals only be used when a threshold (economically significant) level of pest or disease was present and measurable. An earlier release called PEPS - Pesticide Enforcement Policy Statement was broadly interpreted to prevent application of fungicides prior to disease. The PEPS conditions under which the EPA will act now reads "A) the label of the pesticide which is used does not affirmatively prohibit preventive treatments, B) the target pest is reasonably expected to infest the treated area, and C) the pesticide is normally safe and efficacious against the target pest when used in a preventive capacity". Item B will be determined by the agency on a case-by-case basis. The determination will be based on past experience in a given environmental situation and recognized good pest control practices. This and the efficacy requirement (item C) are designed to protect man and the environment from unreasonable adverse effects of pesticides. This new statement on preventive treatment will soon appear as the fourth PEPS.

EPA opposes administrative reconsideration of Mercury for golf green use while admitting error in cancelling the registration of mercurial pesticides for use in waterbased paints and coatings. Administrator Train said the February 17 decision gave undue weight to certain portions of the testimony which led him to overestimate the overall equivalency and efficacy of non-mercurial substitutes in paint formulations. Thus, in May mercurial registrations were reinstated for 1) in-can preservative in water-based paints and coatings, and 2) as a fungicide in water-based paints and coatings used for exterior application. The decision does not affect Golf Course use of mercury; however, companies may continue to produce mercurial fungicides until November 30, 1976. The snow mold mercury case will be heard in the Regional Court of Appeals, St. Louis, Mo.

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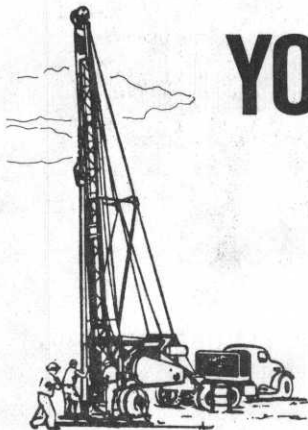
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Summer disease problems have been few for those with water and no disaster to recover from. Some superintendents who regularly have problem greens are reporting excellent turf thru June. These greens often were hit with leaf spot and crown rot due to Helminthosporium, but the dry spring and summer has reduced this fundamental disease to minor levels. However, lest you relax, the dollar spot season is now on us and the effects of long term drought will take its toll also. Pumps that have turned so often this season will be tested even more as the July and August heat waves roll by. I've seen several golf courses where water pressure or rather lack of it has resulted in unsightly fairways and tees drying and dying at the outer edges. The warm, hot nights that favor Pythium and Rhizoctonia are and will continue to test the balance the superintendent tries to establish between host (grass) and pathogen.

The week of July 11, I attended the 68th Annual meeting of the American Phytopathological Society and learned that at least two common Pythium species could completely rot the root system without any foliar blight so often associated with Pythium. Needless to say, the plants died when the root rot was complete. Others reported and discussed diseases like Fusarium Blight, Blister Smut, Red Thread and other species of Rhizoctonia that are becoming important. Diagnosis of turf diseases is not becoming easier and effective control requires proper diagnosis. Another excellent paper was presented by Laura Sweets on the "Effect of Environmental Factors on the Growth of Typhula species and Sclerotinia borealis". Laura is a graduate student working on my project and soon will finish her Masters Degree.

Snow Mold test plot results for 1975-1976 were exciting and disappointing. Two plots - Rochester and U of MN had so little disease that no readings were made. Bemidji and Roseau were diseased but also suffered from winter burn and data was difficult to interpret. Plots at Minneapolis and Mendota were oversprayed with additional fungicides which confounded the results. Data was, however, collected at three locations, and I can report no single treatment was as effective as 5 oz. of Caloclor. One experimental combination granular product - fertilizer and two fungicides, looked very good, but one year's results cannot be trusted. Calogram at 10 lbs/100 f² was also an effective single product treatment. Tersan SP alone and PCNB alone were not satisfactory. Mixing Tersan SP and Caloclor, or Caloclor and PCNB or Tersan SP and PCNB provided the best disease control in the north section of Minnesota. A complete snow mold report will be released soon.

Presently, I have 44 reports from the Minnesota Golf Turf Superintendents on the snow mold questionnaire. During August these reports will be tabulated and a report prepared for your use. If you still have the form on your desk, why not take the time to fill it in and send it to me. Some very interesting comments and patterns are developing as I study the questionnaire.



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