



The Aliette/Fore combination performs well on test plots in North Carolina.

Product mix proves two can be better than one

■ When dollar spot got in the way of his brown patch research, Dr. Pete Dernoeden tried a product mix that today is a new product for disease control.

The University of Maryland professor of agronomy was testing AgrEvo's Prostar 50 WP fungicide. "Before we could collect our brown patch data," remembers Dernoeden, "dollar spot would appear and wipe out our plots."

improved control of both diseases, with brown patch control going from 14-21 days to 21-28 days.

"The product combination appears to have an additive effect," says Dernoeden. "In other words, mixing the two products together provided better control of brown patch (rhizoctonia blight) than would have been expected with a normal use rate of Prostar alone."

Symptoms

■ On bentgrass golf courses, rhizoctonia blight symptoms first appear as tan blotches or lesions with reddish-brown margins.

The foliar blighting caused by rhizoctonia has a distinctive brown cast surrounded by a smoke ring effect when grass is wet. Large areas become blighted very quickly.

Rhizoctonia blight can often be misdiagnosed as pythium blight.

Couch recommends the Agri-Diagnostic kit now available to turf man-



agers. The chemical test is easy to administer and provides results in 20 minutes.

"Once turf managers know they have rhizoctonia blight, we suggest they spray with Prostar or Prostar Plus the first time that nighttime temperatures remain above 70 degrees," says Couch. "Temperature is the real key to rhizoctonia control, but when it also becomes humid, the fungus starts colonizing and you can get some serious disease outbreaks."

To gain control of the dollar spot problem, Dernoeden mixed Bayer Inc.'s Bayleton turf and ornamental fungicide with the Prostar. The combination

"A rate of two ounces of Prostar WP and one ounce Bayleton 25 DF per 1000 square feet provided a level of control equivalent to four ounces of Prostar."

emerged bentgrass greens. Tests are scheduled for this year to further verify any potential problems.

Lucas emphasizes the need for continued sound management practices, including fertilization levels, soil aeration as needed and air circulation around the greens.

"To get the best results, you have to look at the big picture and consider the entire biological system in which grass is grown."

On the market—The combination control product is now available as a "twin-pack," under the name Prostar Plus. After more than 50 university trials in 10 different states over seven years, brown patch control is consistent even under high disease pressure, according to AgrEvo.

Prostar Plus is packaged in water-soluble bags containing the lowest rates of both products. Each twin-pack covers 12,000 sq. ft. of turf at the normal usage rate. In addition, the combination provides control of 17 other turf disease, including pink and gray snow mold, summer patch, pink patch and Southern blight.

Another researcher who tested the product combination is Dr. Houston Couch of Virginia Tech. Couch described control of brown patch and dollar spot on a tall fescue sod farm as "extremely effective." An advantage of the tall fescue test was that researchers were able to count diseased leaves rather than estimate the percentage of blighted areas on bentgrass.

Couch recommends turf managers follow a preventive program of disease control rather than take a curative approach.

"They'll actually use less product this way," says Couch. "But the first step in proper disease management is accurate disease identification. Managers need to make sure which disease they are spraying."

Both Dernoeden and Couch suggest preventive brown patch control, during the first or second week in June on cool-season turf.