

Stay ahead of dollar spot in 2019**May 29, 2019**

Dollar spot is one of the biggest summer pests of highly maintained turfgrass. Creeping bentgrass greens, tees and fairways can quickly become covered with the persistent pathogen during warm and wet periods like we have just experienced over the past week. While cultural practices like adequate nitrogen fertilization or planting more resistant turf varieties can help, most managers will still need to apply fungicides to control dollar spot during periods of high pressure.

Last spring I wrote a [Turf iNfo describing the new Smith Kern Dollar Spot Forecast Model](#). This model uses the average temperature and relative humidity over the past five days to predict the risk of a dollar spot outbreak. By using this model, golf course superintendents can stay ahead of this pest and save money by extending the fungicide re-application intervals when the pressure is low.

The action risk threshold is set by the superintendent and depends on factors like dollar spot susceptibility of the grass cultivar, management, growing environment, and golfer tolerance of a disease outbreak. For example, 'Crenshaw' is very susceptible to dollar spot and may have a severe dollar spot outbreak at 10% while a new creeping bentgrass may not have issues until 40% risk or more. It is like the soil moisture meter, every course has slightly different wilt points and every course will have slightly different risk thresholds for dollar spot. Dr. Paul Koch recommends starting at a risk threshold of 20% for fairly susceptible cultivars like "Penncross" to start.

In short, if you're dollar spot risk is below the Risk Threshold, then you don't need to spray for dollar spot. For example, you spray when the Outbreak Risk is 40% with a product that can suppress the disease for 28d. After 28 days, the risk is at 15% and you don't need to waste an application. GreenKeeper (GreenKeeperApp.com) and GDDTracker.NET can also help by showing the future risk. This is based on the forecast weather conditions over the next 7 to 10 days. This approach can lengthen the time between fungicide applications and can even eliminate an application or two. That can represent a real cost and labor savings when applied to large areas like golf fairways.

Bill Kreuser, Assistant Professor and Turfgrass Extension Specialist, wkreuser2@unl.edu