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Farmers caught in holding pattern on fungicides

By **Tim Hoskins, Iowa Farmer Today**

Farmers might be in a holding pattern with fungicide status.

Darren Mueller, Iowa State University plant pathologist, says three issues are affecting fungicide status as the growing season nears.

The first issue is the EPA's approval of new Section 18 fungicides.

"The EPA is sitting on some Section 18s," he says.

The EPA has approved some fungicides with Section 18 for South Dakota and Minnesota. Those two states were the first to petition the EPA for Section 18 approvals for soybean rust.

Other soybean-producing states filed "me-too" petitions. The result is Section 18 fungicides will first be approved for South Dakota and Minnesota and then the "me-too" states.

Basically, farmers and chemical companies are caught between the approvals for South Dakota and Minnesota and the "me-too" states.

Some of the fungicides that fall in that area are Alto and Carumba, a co-pack of Headline and Carumba, TopGuard and Punch.

"They should be approved before the growing season," says Mueller.

However, Mueller has heard for a long time EPA approval is just around the corner.

Another issue is the EPA has granted Section 3 status to fungicides, originally purchased as Section 18. Section 3 status allows farmers a broader range of applications than Section 18.

Some fungicides falling into this area are Tilt, Propimax, Bumper and Laredo.

After consulting with the Iowa Department of Agriculture, Mueller says the label is the law. That means if the fungicide has a Section 18 label, a farmer needs to apply it according to label restrictions.

Mueller says if farmers want to apply a fungicide as a Section 3, they will need to get a supplemental label.

The last issue is Section 18 approval was granted in November 2004 for three years. That means those labels expire this November.

With the exception of Domark and Headline SBR, he says the seller does not have to return the product if it is not used when the Section 18 status expires because the fungicide is approved in other applications.

Some Section 18 fungicides are expecting Section 3 status, which is more permanent.

"By law, Domark and Headline SBR have to be taken back," Mueller says.