

TURF QUALITY HINGES ON TURF HEALTH

As competition for golfers continues to intensify, superintendents are facing increased pressure to maintain the highest turf quality possible, despite weather or play challenges. Many are finding that keeping turf strong and healthy year-round is the best way to ward off disease and deliver playing surfaces golfers demand.

Jason Manfull, superintendent at Crow Valley Golf Club, Davenport, Iowa, balances typical transition zone summer stress with the members' high expectations for excellent playability. This Quad City golf course underwent a major renovation during the late 1990s. As the fairways were converted from *Poa annua* to bentgrass, Manfull decided to add Chipco® Signature™ to the maintenance program.

"We were looking for a way to keep plants healthier and control disease," Manfull recalls. "We added Signature to the program in 1996 and have been using it ever since. I'm seeing overall healthier turf with a greener appearance and better shoot density."

Manfull makes his first Signature application in early June and treats every 14 days throughout the season. He adds other contact fungicides to his tank mix as conditions warrant.

"Not only do we see good disease control with Signature," Manfull says, "but by making plants healthier overall, the turf has better heat, stress and wear tolerance."

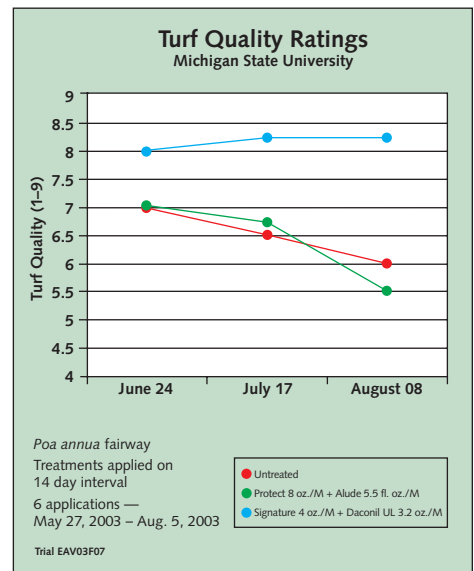
Weathering the Extremes

For Valley Green Golf and Country Club Superintendent Larry "Hank" McLean, extreme weather in his Greensburg, Pa., location has tested his ability to provide golfers with his trademark unblemished greens. Despite extreme heat one year and excessive moisture the next, McLean defended his reputation for providing spotless greens.

"Since I started using Signature nine years ago, I haven't had *Pythium* on my greens or tees," McLean says. "Even during tough weather conditions, our turf remains strong and healthy. I attribute that to Signature."

While McLean doesn't scrimp on

turf maintenance, he needs to watch his budget carefully. "When you compare my course's fungicide budget with others in the area, I'm probably spending less," he explains. "But because I consistently stay with my Signature program, I have fewer disease problems and better-looking greens than many courses."



Stress Prevention Crucial

The key to consistently healthy turf is to start a maintenance program before problems begin, explains Karl Danneberger, professor of turfgrass science at The Ohio State University.

Danneberger's research on stress management for golf course greens showed that Signature in combination with Daconil® or 26GT® measurably improved turf quality. "It's become common for superintendents to use some type of Signature program," he adds. "It's a good fungicide for its labeled uses."

"When you use a Signature tank-mix program, it's important to begin applications before stress starts and continue until the stress period is over," Danneberger notes. "Once disease takes hold, you have fewer options to recover healthy turf." ■

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