



NUFARM'S latest fungicide for use by banana growers to control Leaf Spot and Leaf speckle, Opus75 has recently been granted an experimental permit by the APVMA in order to pursue aerial registration.

Opus75 is a new active, containing 75g/L Epoxiconazole and is a Group C DMI fungicide. One of the first to line up to use Opus75 by air has been a Tully banana grower, Patrick and Ellen Leahy.

The Leahy's will use the fungicide across an area of bananas that will continue to be monitored by the Nufarm research and development team.

Nufarm initially approached Patrick and Ellen because they use other products within the Nufarm range. Patrick said he was only too happy to be a part of it.

"The biggest problem is we don't see many new crop protection products come into the banana industry so when a company comes forward and they are willing to develop something new, you've got to support it," he said.

Patrick's plan is to put Opus75 into the current chemical rotation which currently consists of a Group Y protectant Mancozeb, Group C (DMI) and Group K (strobilurin) all applied under a sound fungicide resistance management strategy.

Opus75 is a Group C (DMI) triazole and may be applied up to 6 times in a season from November until June as prescribed by disease resistance management guidelines.

"We rotate our chemical groups so that we prolong the onset of resistance to them and Opus75 now provides us with an additional product for use in our programs." Patrick said.

"It (Opus75) appears to be just a bit more robust than the other ones (DMI's) that we are already using." The Leahy's property was not touched by black sigatoka however several neighbouring farms were. It's no wonder they welcome each new weapon for disease control.

"We strive to keep it very clean ever since black sigatoka arrived in the area and we apply our sprays when they are due, we conduct our deleafing when it's due. We don't want to ever go back to what we had before," Patrick said.

The year so far has brought ideal growing conditions with rain at night and heat throughout the day. Patrick said the 2005 season was shaping up well and he expects to grow a large crop this year.

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