

# AGRICULTURAL BEET

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2021: Maintaining  
the Momentum

## Cercospora Leafspot (CLS) Control Program 2021: Taking the wide turn at 2<sup>nd</sup> Base!



Last year we established a branded rally cry for an aggressive CLS control strategy. We called it “*The 70-Day Challenge*”. It relied upon a “front-end-heavy” approach to fungicide applications beginning around June 20<sup>th</sup>-25<sup>th</sup> in order to stay clean through early September (about 70 days). This 70-day goal for a totally clean field at the first of September seeks to replace the former strategy of starting in early July and

then trying to play “catch-up” with the disease. A strategy that too-often required the maintenance of tight application intervals in addition to making fungicide applications well into mid and late September to prevent fields from burning down. The *70-Day Challenge* marks a significant paradigm shift away from a commonly held perception that an early fungicide program initiation will innately mandate additional fungicide applications, workload, and expense toward one that is based upon early program success capable of “earning” an opportunity to actually ease off of the gas pedal later in the season when time is a valuable commodity for dealing with impending harvest preparation.

Near the end of July in 2020, I referenced a common baseball term of “Rounding 2<sup>nd</sup> base” to mark successful attainment of the half way point in our challenge. The analogy premise recognizes that a player that has reached and/or rounded 2<sup>nd</sup> base is generally considered to be in “scoring position”. Similarly, upon reaching the end of July with relatively CLS-free sugarbeet fields, we now possess a vision of the entire playing field and can clearly see both where we’ve been and even more importantly, the path that will allow us to score.



**Bottom Line:** We are definitely in a dry weather pattern. This will undoubtedly impact our decisions relating to CLS fungicide application timings and intervals going forward. However, we cannot let it entirely change or distract from our mission of maintaining a clean field through September 1<sup>st</sup>. As we progress past this significant milestone in our 70-Day Challenge, consider taking the wide turn at 2<sup>nd</sup> base. A wide turn implies maintaining our momentum to carry us home while scanning (*scouting*) the playing field to provide the perspective needed to adequately assess our current condition.