Fall Strawberry Disease Management: Alternatives to Thiram

Strawberries are starting to go in the ground now and the slow start to the season for most folks will probably be a boon considering that the intense summer heat just broke. We are now in our third season with a heightened risk of Neopestalotiopsis, and it still seems to be on the fore front of everyone's mind. I've gotten several questions from growers and county agents over the last two weeks regarding disease management and fungicide timing/selection in strawberry, and I'd like to thoroughly address many of these topics so everyone can make the best decision for their farm. Just a reminder that we currently recommend applying effective fungicides every 10-14 days in the fall to manage Neopestalotiopsis. Although we did not see much of this disease in 2025, we should still treat this year as if the risk is high, as the potential losses far outweigh the cost of additional sprays.

What's up with Thiram?

We have become dependent on thiram as the cornerstone of our Neopestalotiopsis management program, and it remains the most effective mutli-site fungicide for suppression of the Neopestalotiopsis. However, in 2025 many growers started having issues finding Thiram SC, and the supply has seemed to completely dry up going into 2026. The EPA has been reviewing the registration for Thiram since 2015 and has proposed the removal of all non-seed treatment uses, including strawberry and peaches, since at least 2021. See the amended proposed interim decision (PID) from April 2024 for an outline of the details and timeline. There has been no update since the PID was posted and all comment periods closed well over a year ago. The EPA still has given us no update on the future of Thiram, and it appears that the manufacturer stopped production. Whether it will be available in the future appears to be anyone's guess at this point.

Without Thiram, what Options Effectively Suppress Neopestalotiopsis?

Thiram is our go-to product for fall management of Neopestalotiopsis. It is critical to spray plants immediately after they are planted to reduce disease inoculum, and continued protection is necessary until we significantly cool down. Below is a list of the products that consistently exhibit acceptable efficacy in reducing Neopestalotiopsis (Table 1). Without thiram we could only consider Inspire Super, Rhyme, Switch, and Tilt as our full arsenal of labeled and effective products to cover fall and spring spray schedules. See the end of the document for a suggested full season spray schedule (Table 2). You may wonder why other states are recommending Inspire instead of Inspire Super, but no label exists for Inspire in Arkansas currently. Old stock could still be used if purchased when labelled.

Table 1 – Fungicides that are Effective in Suppressing Neopestalotiopsis in Strawberry

Product	Active Ingredient	FRAC	Use Rate	Uses and Notes	PHI (days)
Thiram	thiram	M3	2.5 qts	5 apps East of Mississippi River	1
Switch	cyprodinil+ Fludioxonil	9+12	11-14 oz	5 apps at 11 oz/A rate	0
Rhyme	flutriafol	3	7 fl oz	4 apps max	0
Tilt	propiconazole	3	4 fl oz	3 apps max	0
Inspire Super	difenoconozole + cyprodinil	3 + 9	16-20 fl oz	4 apps max	0

We currently only recommend thiram for fall use to save some fungicides like Switch or Inspire Super for the spring where they are vital for management of Anthracnose fruit rot and grey mold. You may ask, "Why don't we save Switch for the spring and use Inspire Super in the fall?" The problem is that fungicide labels consider any application of Inspire Super as one use of Switch due to their shared active ingredient, cyprodinil. Spraying five, 11 oz applications of Switch in a season would fully use up your allowable cyprodinil limits.

Tilt is an effective and easy to find product that would be a nice replacement for fall use, however, propiconazole containing products, such as Tilt, have been known to stunt strawberry plants. Work in South Carolina in 2024/2025 indicated a numerical reduction in plant growth and yield after applications of propiconazole in the fall, although no statistically significant reduction was observed. These data indicated that some level of stunting is likely from fall applications of Tilt. It can be very difficult in our region to get plant size and crown numbers necessary for optimal yield prior to the dormancy period, especially considering late plant deliveries and how early frosts may occur. I believe the risk is much higher in our growing region compared to South Carolina. We have a much shorter time from planting to dormancy and plants usually withstand much cooler temperatures earlier in their transition into dormancy. Ultimately propiconazole use in the fall may be worth it with heavy disease loads and normal planting times, you should just expect some lower yields to lower the disease risk.

For more information on DMI (FRAC 3) usage in strawberry, consider the follow article by Phil Brannen in the Small Fruit News. https://smallfruits.org/2025/09/dmi-fungicides-for-neopestalotiopsis/

Recommendations for Fall Neopestalotiopsis Sprays if you don't have Thiram

If you can't find Thiram your go-to product in the fall needs to be Captan or Rhyme. Captan has been shown to have some activity on Neopestalotiopsis, and getting it out

every 10-14 days in the fall will be better than not spraying. We don't often list it on our effective products list because initial spray trials didn't indicate great efficacy, but newer studies seem to suggest Captan is giving us suppression of Neopestalotiopsis to some degree. If you are running a minimal schedule or produce on a small amount of acreage, it's possible you could get away with using Captan alone in the fall, especially in years when the plants are looking clean and it is projected to stay relatively dry.

Rhyme may be a more reliable option for fall applications, although it can be pricey and harder to find. We don't expect Rhyme to stunt plants like Tilt, however, fall applications of Rhyme would increase the risk of developing resistance to FRAC 3 fungicides. If you must rely on Rhyme due to not having thiram, I would highly recommend mixing it with captan for each application. The addition of an effective, multi-site fungicide would likely increase efficacy and decrease the risk of resistance issues.

When to Begin and End Fall Fungicide Applications

In the 2024/2025 strawberry season, producers who put out effective fungicides immediately after planting and throughout the warm portions of the fall were the ones that saw the least amount of plant loss from Neopestalotiopsis. I highly recommend you apply an effective fungicide within a few days of planting, especially considering the wet weather over the next few days. In years when plants appear clean, as many do this year, and we are relatively dry with a quick cool-down, I think 1-2 fungicide applications would get you to dormancy. If you have pervasive leaf spot and/or have been hit by several rain events, you really need applications out every 10-14 days, which would probably mean 3-4 applications in the fall. If it turns off dry I would not spray any sooner than 14 days, especially if it rapidly starts to cool down.

Neopestalotiopsis is a disease that doesn't necessarily need warm weather to occur, but in our experience once it cools down the risk of continued development and further infection reduces significantly. Once the daily high gets between 50-60°F with cold nights, I think we have reached our last spray for the fall. In 2025/2026 we made our last application in our Neopestalotiopsis inoculation trials the first week of November, and I feel confident that we didn't see any increases in leaf spot or movement of the disease until it warmed back up in the spring. Keep an eye out for extended warm periods (highs between 70-80°F and warmer nights) and if you are playing catch-up with diseased plants, I would extend sprays further into the fall.

As always there are many nuances when making these decisions. Feel free to give me a call or send me a text or email anytime to discuss your situation and we can try to find a successful path forward.

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Table 2. Example Spray Schedule for Strawberry Protection in the Mid-South

*Example Schedule with Thiram**			*Example Schedule Without Thiram**		
App #	**Fungicide**	**FRAC Group**	**App #**	**Fungicide**	**FRAC Group**
Fall 1	Thiram	M03	Fall 1	Rhyme + Captan	3 + M04
Fall 2	Thiram	M03	Fall 2	Rhyme + Captan	3 + M04
Fall 3	Thiram	M03	Fall 3	Captan	M04
Fall 4	Thiram	M03	Fall 4	Captan	M04
Spring 1	Switch	12 + 9	Spring 1	Switch	12 + 9
Spring 2	Captan + Elevate + Rhyme	M04 + 17 + 3	Spring 2	Captan + Elevate + Rhyme	M04 + 17 + 3
Spring 3	Switch + Captan	12 + 9 + M04	Spring 3	Switch + Captan	12 + 9 + M04
Spring 4	Captan + Elevate + Tilt	M04 + 17 + 3	Spring 4	Captan + Elevate + Rhyme	M04 + 17 + 3
Spring 5	Luna Sensation + Thiram	7 + 11 + M03	Spring 5	Luna Sensation + Tilt	7 + 11 + 3
Spring 6	Switch + Captan	12 + 9 + M04	Spring 6	Switch + Captan	12 + 9 + M04
Spring 7	Luna Sensation + Captan + Tilt	7 + 11 + M04 + 3	Spring 7	Luna Sensation + Captan + Tilt	7 + 11 + M04 + 3
Spring 8	Switch + Captan	12 + 9 + M04	Spring 8	Switch + Captan	12 + 9 + M04
Spring 9	Luna Sensation + Captan + Rhyme	7 + 11 + M04 + 3	Spring 9	Luna Sensation + Captan + Tilt	7 + 11 + M04 + 3
Spring 10	Switch + Captan	12 + 9 + M04	Spring 10	Switch + Captan	12 + 9 + M04
Spring 11	Cabrio Captan + Tilt	11 + M04 + 3	Spring 11	Cabrio + Captan	11 + M04

*Review all label requirements including product use limits, restrictions, and availability, and determine if these products are labelled for your specific state. The label is the law.