



**MICHIGAN  
ASPARAGUS**

**MICHIGAN ASPARAGUS ADVISORY BOARD**

12800 Escanaba Drive, Suite A, DeWitt, MI 48820

517-669-4250

[www.michiganasparagus.org](http://www.michiganasparagus.org)

August 31, 2022

Jerry Baron, Executive Director  
IR-4 Project  
North Carolina State University  
1730 Varsity Drive  
Venture IV, Suite 210  
Raleigh, NC 27606

RE: Michigan Asparagus Grower Request for IR-4 Data Development

Dear Mr. Baron:

The Michigan Asparagus Advisory Board (MAAB) requests that IR-4 develop additional data to support label changes for two fungicide products so growers can more effectively address purple spot in asparagus. IR-4 work can build on work done at Michigan State University -- supported by asparagus growers -- that found Miravis Prime and Merivon effectively control purple spot. We request an "A" priority for Miravis Prime and an "H+" priority for Merivon.

MAAB was formed by Michigan's asparagus growers in 1978 to support production research and create greater marketing opportunities to improve the economic position of growers. Asparagus is grown on 10,000 acres in Michigan by more than 100 multi-generational growers. Michigan ranks first in the United States in asparagus acres and production. Growers harvested approximately 25 million pounds in 2022. The most recent estimate of the value of Michigan asparagus crop is more than \$23 million (MDARD 2019). Asparagus is a perishable vegetable that is hand-harvested for multiple markets during a 7-8 week growing season in May and June each year. Asparagus is a perennial crop with a stand lifespan of twelve to sixteen years.

Michigan asparagus growers face fierce competition from Peruvian and Mexican asparagus imports during the harvest season. Imported fresh volumes have grown nearly 115 percent in the past decade putting significant pressure on growers that only continues to increase. Consequently, Michigan growers shifted to fresh production to increase returns. A decade ago, about 35 percent of Michigan's asparagus went into the fresh market. Today, more than 60% of our production goes there.

The shift to fresh market asparagus makes effectively managing purple spot a critical issue for Michigan growers. Stemphylium purple spot is an annual issue which causes fern defoliation and blemishes on the harvested spears. This causes two significant issues for growers -- reduced crown regeneration which leads to reduced yields and blemishes on harvested spears making them unmarketable in the fresh market. Significant disease also makes them unmarketable in the frozen processed market since blanching makes the blemishes even more visible. The industry has relied on chlorothalonil, mancozeb, and azoxystrobin for purple spot control. Given the pressure from imports and our shift to fresh market asparagus, we need more tools.

*Promoting the Use of Asparagus*

MAAB met earlier this month and discussed the MSU purple spot research trials and the urgent need for additional tools. Growers are excited about adding additional fungicide tools that are applied to the fern only after harvest. For the reasons outlined above, MAAB requests that IR-4 establish Miravis Prime as an "A" priority and Merivon as an "H+" priority.

Thank you for your consideration.

Sincerely,

*Jamie Clover Adams*

Jamie Clover Adams  
Executive Director

Cc: Nicole Soldan, North Central Interim Regional Field Coordinator  
Dr. Mary Hausbeck, MSU