

# The Value of a Dollar

As humans, we all associate the value of a dollar differently. If we pay more, does that mean the item or product is better? If it hardly cost anything, do we lower our expectations? What about deals or bundling? This usually changes the value. We often see ads that state “Buy more, save more.” How about the value on ourselves, such as the people who walk and text at the same time and walk in front of cars?

Look at Apple and the way we perceive the value we get from them. Sears and other stores give us lifetime warranties on many items, for others it might come in the form of customer service. Then there are fungicides. Why are some of the name brand fungicides so expensive? Can we get a better deal elsewhere...probably, but you need to figure out the “true” value as well.

What’s the difference, what’s been added, what do you expect, what do you need? Once we find out, we need to look at the true value associated with the cost. What is our time worth? We can use one fungicide (lower cost, less value) and may have to make several applications. Or we can use a name brand fungicide and make only one application. So do we think we’re spending less money on a product only to find out we need to make several more applications?

I saw a cartoon ad last year that pictured two walk-up stands (similar to lemonade stands) with men in them, the caption on one read “Legal advice 5 cents.” The other caption read “Accurate legal advice \$100.” Not only do we look for deals and cost cutting, we need to look at “where” our money is best spent and if we are making wise decisions.

## DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Before buying something, if we have a choice between brands we need to read the fine print and see what the difference is. Read the label. See what the exact ingredients state; sometimes you’ll find a difference in percentages or one will have a generic ingredient mixed in with other name brands. There are a lot of products out there that are not tested, and that’s why you have a less expensive product.

Sometimes, we forget how much a dollar can buy with sticker shock. This reminds me of what happened years ago when Subdue was first introduced. Everyone was appalled at how expensive a container was. They all failed to consider the use rate per 100

gallons (often as low as 0.5 ounce), the longevity of the efficacy (at that point 30 days or longer) and even how effective the new FRAC group was. This was the first product that gave what they called reach back in agriculture crops like grapes. The fact was that it could eradicate a downy mildew infection after it had occurred.

It’s *deja vu* all over again. I am hearing the exact same complaint about Segovis, a new fungicide from Syngenta based once again on the cost of the container. The important lesson is there is more to the question of the value of a dollar than the cost of the container has yet to be learned. With Segovis we are seeing a very long-lasting effect in impatiens downy mildew. One recent trial showed prevention for longer than 60 days after the application even when all other plants were clobbered and dead in the dirt.

It is important to remember that the value of a product is not based on a single fact. You must look at all features to see whether or not something is cost effective. Do you get a good return on the investment?

## SEEK EXPERT ADVICE

On another topic, how many of you have a relationship with an expert? This could be university, Extension or private consultant. Do you hang back from asking for help? It might surprise you how much money you can save if you ask the right person at the right time for some help. If you can get this from a university researcher, that is great and it’s easy to see that what you pay in tax dollars has a great return.

If you need to employ a consultant, then how can you tell if it is worth your dollars? Once again, make sure you know how much the right answer can save you in higher material costs, increased labor and at times loss of client/customer base. Then decide who can answer your questions. In our Ask Ann program, many answers are charged at 10 minutes which at the most expensive is only \$50. Fighting the wrong thing with the wrong product or approach is a real waste of your hard earned dollars. The value of a dollar is not just what something costs you but what it can save you in lost income. Start thinking more often instead of just reacting to the sticker! [gpn](#)

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*Chase Agricultural Consulting, LLC was formed in 2011 by Ann (A.R.) Chase and Mike Zemke. Ann has more than 35 years experience in research, diagnostics and practical consulting in plant pathology. She has been retired from the University of Florida since 1994 but remains on staff as a Professor Emeritus. Mike holds an Associate of Applied Science in manufacturing drafting and started his education in horticulture when he and Ann were married in 1995. He specializes in communications of all sorts within the industry.*