

Friday, September 9, 2016

Growers urged to monitor and act NOW for rust

Growers are urged to monitor crops and apply fungicides as soon as practically possible following a number of reports of barley leaf rust and wheat stripe and leaf rusts across Victoria and South Australia.

Agriculture Victoria's Senior Plant Pathologist – Cereals Dr Grant Hollaway said with forecast rain, there was likely to be an increase in rust as the season progressed.

"Growers need to be monitoring crops and making decisions now for applying fungicides," he said.

"Growers will need to consider the growth stage of their crop, yield potential, variety susceptibility to rust and the level of rust in the crop when deciding on a fungicide strategy.

"As the weather warms during the coming weeks the speed of rust development will increase, which is why growers need to make their control decisions now."

Rust has been reported in barley and wheat crops in the Mallee and Wimmera. Currently, wheat leaf rust is present at low levels, however it is likely to increase as temperatures warm during spring.

In South Australia, the recent warmer weather will likely have enabled a rapid spread of leaf rust in wheat and barley, according to SARDI pathologist Dr Hugh Wallwork.

"Virulence in leaf rust on the new barley variety Compass has been detected on the Eyre Peninsula in recent weeks and a crop of Compass was found to be severely infected in the Mallee near Sherlock last week," he said.

"Compass is now rated as very susceptible (VS) to leaf rust. This means that barley crops across the state should be closely monitored from now on as infection is likely to move rapidly in the more susceptible varieties.

"In wheat, leaf rust is still mostly at low levels although a report from the West Coast suggests that infection in warmer areas has started to become more serious. This is why it is vital that unprotected wheat crops are monitored carefully from now on.

"A shortage of some fungicides means that options for spraying are more limited than we would like. Growers and advisers need to bear this in mind when planning ahead."

What to do if you suspect your crops have rust:

- [To help identify suspected rust on your crops, visit the Rust Bust website.](#)
- [Discuss your options with your adviser and make a decision on spraying.](#)
- Let your neighbours know if you have found rust so they can monitor their crops too.
- [Send a sample to the Australian Cereal Rust Survey.](#)

"It's really important that growers be vigilant in their observations so we can get on top of any potential rust outbreak quickly," Dr Hollaway said.

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The Rust Bust campaign is an initiative of The Australian Cereal Rust Control Program (ACRCP) Consultative Committee. The ACRCP, established in 1973, monitors cereal rust pathogens throughout Australia, finds and characterises new sources of rust resistance, and assists Australian cereal breeding groups to incorporate rust resistance in new cultivars. The ACRCP Consultative Committee includes representatives from state pathology and breeding groups and provides a key link between industry and the ACRCP. The ACRCP is funded largely by the grains industry, through the Grains Research & Development Corporation (GRDC).

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