



MEDIA RELEASE

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Vigilance needed against stripe rust and sprouting in new wheat varieties

Susceptibility to stripe rust and consequent yield loss of up to 70 per cent in unsprayed crops is a potential in some new varieties of wheat according to SARDI New Variety Evaluation senior scientist Rob Wheeler.

Speaking at the Hart Field-Site Group 'Getting the Crop In' seminar in Clare last week (Thursday, March 11), Mr Wheeler said 2009 SARDI research highlighted the need for growers to be vigilant in their monitoring of wheat for stripe rust.

"There's particular interest in some new varieties of wheat that don't have as good a stripe rust resistance as you'd like," he said.

"Our data showed last year that you could suffer up to 70pc yield loss in very susceptible varieties with no protection from fungicides.

"The potential is there for quite large yield losses from stripe rust and some of the newer varieties are getting down in terms of their resistance to it."

Mr Wheeler said graingrowers must be aware of the susceptibility of some newer varieties of wheat for stripe rust.

"Be aware of the resistance levels, monitor them carefully and be prepared to spray," he said.

"The resistance ratings for all varieties can be found in the latest disease guides released by Dr Hugh Wallwork and published in the SARDI Crop Harvest Report."

Mr Wheeler said another significant finding of his 2009 trials was the importance of a timely harvest and mix of varieties to avoid sprouting in wheat, again particularly some new varieties.

"All wheats are susceptible, but we have some newer varieties that are more susceptible," he said.

"Timely harvest is critical as is the need to look closely at the mix of varieties – you really need to spread your risk by not just growing one variety. We found the best performing variety in 2008 was not necessarily the best performing in 2009."

Hart Field-Site Group trials manager Peter Hooper also spoke to farmers at the seminar about some of the major findings from last year's Hart trials, including the impact the time of sowing had on crop yields.

"Early sowing in cereals and in pulses was a benefit and generally led to higher yields," he said.

“Timely sowing is the key. It’s the finishing date that is important and if it means sowing by the calendar and starting dry, that’s the length that some farmers are going to and the trials support that.

“In cereals last year, whether it was wheat, durum or barley, we found the sowing rate wasn’t a big factor, but the sowing time was.”

However there were some drawbacks to an early start.

“There’s higher risk of disease in pulses with early sowing,” Mr Hooper said.

“Also early sown barley or wheat in some cases grew too much biomass, used too much moisture and then limited itself to yield come spring.

“These trial results are really reinforcing what a lot of people suspected about the importance of sowing time.”

The Hart Field-Site Group Trials Results 2009 book, including all 2009 trial results from the site, is now available at a cost of \$10. Contact Sandy Kimber on 0427 423 154 or email admin@hartfieldsite.org.au for a copy.

SARDI has also released its Crop Harvest Report, for more information take a look at the website www.sardi.sa.gov.au

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