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OILSEEDS NEWS - MEDIA RELEASES

NEW SCLEROTINIA MANAGEMENT FACTSHEET

Hot off the press is a new factsheet for growers and agronomists for the management of the sporadic and serious disease, sclerotinia stem rot in canola.

The Canola Association of Australia, with the support of the Grains Research and Development Corporation (GRDC), has released the factsheet.

Sclerotinia stem rot is a fungal disease that has emerged in some regions of Australia, particularly those with wet springs. Southern New South Wales and northeast Victoria are the main canola-growing regions of Australia affected by the disease, although it has occurred also around Geelong and parts of Western Australia.

The disease affects a wide range of broadleaf crops, and in canola can reduce yields by up to 24 per cent.



CROP PROTECTION: NSW DPI pathologist Kurt Lindbeck says the new factsheet will give canola growers more control in managing sclerotinia stem rot.

PHOTO: Felicity Pritchard.

However, it is a difficult disease to control once the crop is sown, and prevention by use of foliar fungicides is the only effective post-emergent management option for growers.

Co-author and Pulse and Oilseed Pathologist, Kurt Lindbeck with the New South Wales Department of Primary Industries at Wagga Wagga said that the factsheet is timely, as fungicide applications need to be applied before the disease takes hold in spring.

“With the high price of canola, a preventative spray becomes more cost-effective in wet years,” he said.

Mr Lindbeck said that yield loss from sclerotinia stem rot is difficult to determine.

“In some years, the disease may be present, but not at high enough levels to affect yields. In other years, yield losses can be costly if the disease is not controlled,” he said.

He said the new guide will give growers a better understanding of the disease and more control over the decisions they make in managing canola crops in sclerotinia-prone areas.

Research undertaken by the Best Bet Canola and Canola Plus projects found yield responses to fungicides from 0.2 to 0.9 tonnes per hectare. In two other years of trials, there was no yield response, while in a fourth year, 2003, spraying was not cost-effective. However, at current canola prices, it would have been highly profitable.

To obtain a copy, please contact Kurt Lindbeck (02) 6938 1608 or Felicity Pritchard on 0427 600 228.

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