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OILSEEDS NEWS

WORLD FIRST RLEM RESISTANCE DISCOVERED IN WA

New approaches are needed to control the devastating insect pest, red legged earthmite, following the world-first detection of insecticide-resistant populations in Western Australia.



RESISTANT: New approaches are now needed to manage red legged earthmite.

PHOTO COURTESY CESAR.

And scientists believe that the problem may be far more widespread.

Dr Paul Umina of the Centre for Environmental Stress and Adaptation said that extremely high levels of resistance to chemicals known as synthetic pyrethroids (SPs) were detected in the Esperance

region, but it's quite probable that the problem exists elsewhere in Australia.

He said that in one case, four applications of SP insecticides failed to control red legged earthmites in a canola crop, causing considerable yield loss.

“We need to monitor this development closely and reconsider standard industry practices for controlling red legged earthmite.

Chemicals have been used as the main method for controlling this pest for more than 50 years, so it’s perhaps surprising that we haven’t encountered resistant red legged earthmite before now.”

The increased usage and reliance on low cost insecticides has accelerated the selection pressure placed on pest populations.

“There is a real need for integrated pest management strategies, but this requires careful monitoring and further research to better understand non-chemical control, including the role of natural biological control agents,” Dr Umina said.

The detection was made possible through the State collaborative networks established under the National Invertebrate Pest Initiative, supported by the Grains Research and Development Corporation.
