

APHID ALERT SUMMARY

Oilseed rape, aphids and flea beetles without neonicotinoids

As you are doubtless aware, this year is the first in which OSR seed treated with neonicotinoid insecticides cannot be sown. This has important consequences for control of the peach–potato aphid (*Myzus persicae*), the main culprit in the spread of turnip yellows virus (TuYV). Nearly all peach–potato aphids are resistant to carbamates such as pirimicarb (e.g. Aphox), and to pyrethroids (e.g. Hallmark), leaving the only available approved insecticide, pymetrozine (Plenum). This can only be applied once, as a spray, and gives protection for approximately two weeks, especially when applied with some (but not all) adjuvant oils, so timing is critical. It is too early to predict levels of peach–potato aphid in the late summer/early autumn migration, but we will keep you informed of numbers in the Rothamsted suction-traps and whether these are low or high compared to normal. This will give a regional indication of relative risk.

The loss of neonicotinoids also has important implications for management of cabbage stem flea beetle (CSFB). As a national average, yield losses to CSFB have been lower than to TuYV, probably because seed treatments have been so effective. However, CSFB can destroy a crop overnight whereas average yield losses to TuYV are 15% but can be as high as 30%. Symptoms don't show until late spring.

Establishment is key as the sooner the crop emerges and starts to grow away the better it will be able to tolerate damage by CSFB adults. Thus drilling in the best possible conditions is important, but there are more agronomic drawbacks than advantages to drilling much earlier than normal. The crop is most vulnerable at emergence as beetles can feed on and destroy the growing point. There are no spray thresholds at emergence but monitoring local pest pressure will give an indication of whether it is necessary. Once the crop is established, only use an insecticide treatment if the following thresholds are exceeded (see also HGCA Information Sheet 24).

- Cotyledon – 2 true leaves: consider spraying when 25% of the green leaf area of the whole crop has been eaten.
- 3–4 leaf stage: consider spraying when 50% of the green leaf area of the whole crop has been eaten.

If at all possible avoid using insecticides to control CSFB, as recent tests have shown that CSFB resistance to pyrethroids is now present in the UK.

ADAS provided detailed information on CSFB control in their *Crop Action* number 34 (24th July) and 35 (7th August).

It would be very helpful if you could email us aphid sightings in your crops so that we can build a better picture of incidence and pass the information around.

In summary, when considering aphids and CSFB:

- Drill in the best possible conditions, but not earlier than you normally would.
- Only consider using pyrethroids to control CSFB if thresholds (above) are reached.
- Watch the *Aphid Alerts* to help determine whether/when to consider using pymetrozine.
- Watch *Crop Action* for updates on CSFB.



Myzus persicae (peach–potato aphid)
Photo: Alan Dewar, Dewar Crop Protection



Turnip yellows virus (TuYV)
Photo: Alan Dewar, Dewar Crop Protection



Further information

www.hgca.com/pests

www.potato.org.uk/online-toolbox/aphid-monitoring

[Rothamsted Insect Survey](#)

[HDC pest bulletin](#)

<http://www.sasa.gov.uk/seed-ware-potatoes/virology/virus-epidemiology>

Please send information on crop aphids to

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