



COTTON TALES

Central Queensland

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2008/09

No.18

16/03/09

Ascochyta blight management for 2009 in Central and Coastal Queensland

Mal Ryley, DPI&F & Gordon Cumming, Pulse Australia
Ascochyta blight, caused by the fungus *Phoma rabiei* (formerly *Ascochyta rabiei*), was identified for the first time in central Queensland in spring 2008. Now that a disease incursion has occurred, growers in the region need to prioritise the control and management of Ascochyta in their chickpea crops to ensure that the incidence and spread of the disease does not increase further within the region.

While the hot dry climate of central Queensland is less conducive to Ascochyta blight than southern areas, the region is not immune. Cool, wet winter conditions favour the pathogen. If Ascochyta blight becomes endemic in central Queensland the industry will face considerable managerial and financial costs. The current chickpea varieties grown in central and coastal Queensland are all very susceptible to Ascochyta blight.

Effective Ascochyta blight management is based upon;

- identification of the level of risk,
- seed treatment,
- crop monitoring
- and strategic use of foliar fungicides.

Low risk situations

The only situation for 2009 that is considered to be at low risk is the use of new planting seed that has been treated with a suitable fungicide seed dressing, and is being planted into a paddock that has not had chickpeas in it for at least 3 years and the surrounding adjacent paddocks have not been planted to chickpeas for at least 3 years:

Crop management for low risk situations after crop emergence:

- Thoroughly inspect the crop for any signs of Ascochyta leaf or stem lesions 7-10 days after each rainfall event.
- If Ascochyta is found apply a fungicide containing 750 g/kg Mancozeb (or an equivalent liquid) at a rate of 2 kg/ha prior to the next expected rain event.
- Continue monitoring and re-apply the fungicide prior to any likely rainfall events if they are greater than 14 days after the last fungicide application.

Moderate risk situations

During the 2009 winter season, all other chickpea production situations are considered to be of moderate risk to infection from Ascochyta. This includes;

- The planting of grower kept seed.
- Planting into paddocks or beside paddocks that have had chickpeas grown in them within the last 3 years.

Crop management for medium risk situations:

- Ensure that all planting seed is treated with a seed dressing that contains the fungicide Thiram.

- Seed treatment is best done by a professional seed grader.
- However, it can also be done effectively on farm with the appropriate equipment.

After crop emergence

- Apply a fungicide containing, 750 g/kg Mancozeb (or an equivalent liquid) at a rate of 1 kg/ha prior to the first rain event after crop emergence.
- Thoroughly inspect the crop for any signs of Ascochyta leaf or stem lesions 7-10 days after each rainfall event.
- If Ascochyta is found apply a fungicide containing 750 g/kg Mancozeb (or an equivalent liquid) at a rate of 2 kg/ha prior to the next expected rain event.
- Continue monitoring and re-apply the fungicide prior to any likely rainfall events if they are more than 14 days after the last fungicide application.

Centre Pivot / Lateral Move course

Subject to sufficient numbers it is hoped to conduct a one day course on Pivots and laterals (early June ?) in both Emerald and Theodore. The course, developed by experienced presenters from CRCIF, Growcom and Agricultural Resources Management, covers the economics, technical and management aspects of converting surface irrigation systems to low-pressure overhead irrigation. It is a one day event that is designed to be of value to both those new to the field and to those who already have experience with CPLM systems. Attendance will be free as FarmReady funding is available for primary producers who attend (to cover the per person cost of \$360). This will be arranged by the presenter.

Could those who may be interested in participating please contact Lance (email or phone call) as the availability of the day depends on having sufficient numbers to justify the presenters travelling to our area.

URGENT URGENT URGENT URGENT

Incentive funding for the purchase of Storage and/or Pump meters

The opportunity to benefit from incentive funding provided by CHRRUP / FBA to purchase storage and pump meters is rapidly diminishing. Growers interested in obtaining up to \$1000 off the purchase price of meters need to contact Lance post-haste as the scheme closes within one week. Give Lance a call if you have any queries regarding this scheme.