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NEW TESTS FOR PULSE DISEASES

New tests are being developed to better understand the key diseases of peas and beans so that they can be better managed.

The work being done at SARDI by Jenny Davidson and funded by SAGIT uses sophisticated DNA tests to assess the level and activity of the diseases

The bad news is that the work has identified an un-named fungal species, Phoma 'X' which is part of the blackspot complex in field peas.

This species, which has been found nowhere else in the world, is widespread on pea crops and pea cropping soils and can cause severe damage including death of plants. It is most common under close pea rotations

Another part of the "smart" DNA based approach has been to develop a test for the disease causing Cercospora leaf spot in faba beans. Again this disease is not a major problem elsewhere in the world,

Little is known about the disease here, except that it builds up rapidly in the soil under close faba bean rotations.

The DNA test is almost developed and will allow for detection of the disease in soil, on plants and on seed.

Management strategies for the disease will then follow.

For further information contact Jenny Davidson, SARDI on 8303 9389.