

## SAGIT COL STOCK JOURNAL

### Plans for blackspot prediction service

A laboratory-developed computer model aimed at forecasting the potential for blackspot disease outbreaks in field peas is being validated in the field.

The validation work is being undertaken, with support from UGH, by the SARDI pulse pathology group headed by senior pulse pathologist, Jenny Davidson

Ms Davidson said visiting French scientist and blackspot pathology specialist, Dr Alex Schoeny, had studied about 10 years of SA field trial data last year in producing the model.

“This year I have been measuring the amount of blackspot in farmers’ paddocks in three regions,” she said.

“These are in the higher rainfall area around Riverton, in medium rainfall zone on southern Yorke Peninsula and in lower rainfall areas around Wudinna.

“I have also gathered management data from farmers including time of sowing, the paddock rotation, proximity of other field pea crops, the use of seed dressings and so on.

“All this will be used to validate Dr Schoeny’s model. The aim is to offer growers a model to assess the risk of their crop getting the disease.

“If for example, the model shows the risk is high then management might be changed to reduce the risk. Dr Schoeny plans to return to Adelaide next year to continue the work.

“In WA, a blackspot prediction model based on the position of the last field pea crop and wind direction is being developed. Ours is more a management model and perhaps in time the two might be combined.”

Ms Davidson said there were generally light outbreaks of blackspot this year in SA. The heaviest tended to be where a crop was grown near last year’s field pea stubble – the disease being carried over on stubble and stubble breakdown being slowed by the dry year of 2002. Meanwhile Ms Davidson’s recommendation that there be a five to six-year interval between field pea crops in the same paddock remains as a blackspot risk-minimisation measure.

“Growers are generally avoiding the early sowing of field peas, again to lessen the chance of blackspot causing damage,” she said. “There is no good news on the variety resistance front – just small gains in blackspot resistance over time.”

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