

There is a heightened risk of disease in ALL crops this season. The current wet conditions are ideal for diseases to develop in crop. Therefore, growers and agronomists are advised to monitor crops closely for symptoms.

Following early reports of disease in cereals, there are now many reports across pulse crops.

In the last 2 weeks, reports of Ascochyta blight infection in lentil have come from across all lentil growing regions in Victoria. There have also been early reports of Ascochyta blight and Cercospora in beans and unconfirmed reports of sclerotinia in lentil and vetch. The early detection is likely linked with the high inoculum carryover from 2022 and continued rain.

Should conditions continue to remain wet, further spread of the symptoms to the upper canopy is expected. Ascochyta exhibits moderate latency period, where plants with lesions and pycnidia have been found, expect further symptoms to develop over the next 10-14 days.

Growers will need to consider the economic benefits of applying fungicides earlier than recommended in an average season. Despite the forecast for drier than average conditions later in the season, some susceptible crops and crops with well-established disease will need protection to avoid yield losses.

Anecdotally, dealing with pulse crops during 2022 there was a benefit in applying fungicides early in the season as it helped to keep the lower part of the canopy clean. Reducing early disease will assist in controlling botrytis (Chocolate spot and Botrytis grey mould) later in the season. Wet and warm conditions aid botrytis development and spread. So, spring conditions will determine the impact of botrytis if it develops in pulse crops.

Research trials held in SA, Vic, and NSW during 2023 as part of a new GRDC investment will provide further clarity around the yield losses associated with Ascochyta blight in lentil and the impact of early infection.

Disease management in all crops

Growers and advisors are encouraged to adopt the approach below to manage crop diseases this season:

1. Review variety ratings using a disease guide to ensure the ratings are current. Do not use last year's ratings. The current Victorian guides can be found [here](#).
2. Monitor crops closely.
3. Assess environmental conditions – has there been much rain/dew the last 2-3 weeks? What is the forecast?
4. Use support tools where they are available, such as the BlacklegCM or StripRustWM app.
5. Apply fungicides where required, following best practice to reduce fungicide resistance. More information on Fungicide resistance can be found on from the Australian Fungicide Resistance and Extension Network (AFREN) at afren.com.au

Don't forget to register for the upcoming disease update and identification morning in Horsham if you have further questions.

Field crops pathology early season disease update

This morning will aim to cover emerging disease issues and what to keep an eye on after last year's high disease load.

When: Wed July 19th @ 9:00am – 11:30 am

Where: Horsham

[Register here](#)

Further information

Further information on these and other field crop disease can be found in the online [Identification & Management of Field Crop Diseases in Victoria](#) manual.

[Sclerotinia in Victorian pulses](#)

Horsham Field Crop Diseases research group (Agriculture Victoria)

For further information and assistance in diagnosing field crop diseases, contact the Horsham Field Crop Diseases research group.

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Kind regards,

The Horsham Field Crops Pathology and CropSafe teams