



Media Statement

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Growers encouraged to check crops for virus

Southern and central wheatbelt growers are encouraged to check their wheat crops for any unusual leaf symptoms with the detection of two cases of high plains virus (HPV).

Department of Agriculture and Food grains industry director David Bowran said HPV was very similar to the wheat streak mosaic virus (WSMV) which was already present in WA, and should not cause alarm for wheat growers.

HPV has been confirmed at a department trial site at Corrigin, and on a grower's property at Kulin.

"HPV is present in the Eastern States and in a number of countries including the United States. Research suggests that HPV and WSMV most often co-infect wheat plants in these areas," Dr Bowran said.

"As with WSMV, HPV may affect the yield potential of wheat crops but it doesn't present any further production or market access constraints over those which exist with WSMV.

"The best management strategy for growers is to control the green bridge in paddocks during summer to prevent the vector for WSMV and HPV, the leaf curl mite, from being present when wheat crops emerge."

Dr Bowran said the department would be doing further surveillance and testing to determine if the virus was more widespread. Symptoms growers should check their crops for are very similar to those for WSMV and include:

- Leaf mottling (mosaic) and leaf streaking.
- Light green streaks running parallel to the leaf veins. These streaks turn yellow and develop into blotches, giving the leaf a green and yellow pattern called a 'mosaic'.
- Tillers on affected plants tend to be less erect than those on uninfected plants.
- Affected plants can die prematurely or fail to grow, becoming stunted relative to healthy plants.
- Heads on infected plants can be sterile and contain no seed, or can contain small to shrivelled grain.

Growers who are concerned about symptoms in their crop should contact their local Department of Agriculture and Food office.

Media contacts:

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