



Chemical resistance in pests growing

LOCUSTS are not expected to be an issue this autumn in the central and upper Great Southern areas, but it may be a different story further south in the Great Southern and at the south coast where there is more green feed.

Pestfax editor Peter Mangano said survival of the second generation of locusts had hatched from the spring generation and bands of them had been seen crossing the road between Albany and Esperance.

Mr Mangano said this had prompted the Agriculture Department to have a second spraying program as opposed to an earlier one in the central area.

"Hopefully that has knocked the population, but there will be some survivors and they'll certainly come through for seeding time," Mr Mangano said.

"The risk is that there will be egg-laying occurring in that population and there is likely to be another spring/summer population in those areas."

Mr Mangano said there was also potential for a new migration of locusts to come in from the Goldfields pastoral region where there had been considerable rainfall from the January cyclone that went through Esperance.

"There is potential for them to restart the cycle," he said.

Mr Mangano said sowing time could be critical and an early break, when it was warmer, would most likely favour the locusts — but if the break was later they would be more aged and therefore have less impact.



He also gave a summary on established pests and questioned how much longer chemical control methods would remain effective.

"We have been increasing the number of pyrethroid sprays in any one season, often five sprays in a season, but is it sustainable?" he asked.

Mr Mangano said alarm bells were raised last year when a farmer at Esperance could not control red-legged earth mite (RLEM).

"From my understanding four sprays were used on the crop and yet the RLEM still survived," he said.

Mr Mangano said the usual checks were made in regards to the batch and whether it had been correctly applied, but everything appeared to be in order.

A sample of the mite was sent to an entomologist at Melbourne University where tests discovered the highest level of RLEM resistance to synthetic pyrethroids.

"Three generations were tested in the lab, they kept rearing it through, and it remained stable, so there are alarm bells," he said.

"Is this an isolated case? Perhaps it is, but we don't know."

"It is unlikely to be, because this farmer is not doing anything other farmers aren't doing."

Mr Mangano said Integrated Pest Management (IPM), using biological control, was one alternative to extensive spraying but it probably wouldn't be adopted until there was no other alternative.

WA primed



Reports by
PETER HENDERSON

BIOFUELS are looming as an exciting new area for the WA grains industry, according to Agriculture Department biofuels project manager and WA Biofuels Taskforce executive officer Anne Wilkins.

In her address to the WA Oilseeds canola production workshop, Ms Wilkins said WA was well positioned for the emerging biofuels industry.

"We are looking at introducing policy strategies to assist with this emerging industry and WA is well positioned to supply such a new industry," she said.

"We are an ideal industry, we have got large grain production, a small population and can meet both State Government requirements and export opportunities as well."

Ms Wilkins said that in 2001, as part of an election promise, the Federal Government had set a biofuel target representing 1pc of Australia's fuel market.

"The Australian Government had a 350 million litre target by 2010 which should be well and truly blown out of the water," she said.

Ms Wilkins said Primary Energy would likely be the main company producing ethanol in WA and

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