



TOBACCO RESEARCH BOARD

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Dear Grower

THERE IS NO CHEMICAL REMEDY FOR POTATO VIRUS Y (PVY)-INFECTED TOBACCO

We have seen an explosion of PVY reports in the current season. These have come through the Plant Clinic and observations have been made during visits to farms in all tobacco growing areas. PVY is a viral disease (Fig. 1) primarily transmitted by the tobacco aphid *Myzus persicae nicotianae*. It is not seed-borne.

Farmers need to be warned that there are **NO** pesticides (fungicides, insecticides, bactericides, viricides) that can cure plants infected by PVY. The application of these products will only result in unwanted buildup of pesticide residues in the cured leaf and this has serious repercussions for the farmer and the whole Zimbabwean tobacco industry, if crop protection agents are detected in the exported leaf. Furthermore, application of these products to an already infected crop will unnecessarily increase production costs to the grower for no additional benefit.

In instances where PVY has already established, it is advised to assess the level of the infestation. If infestation is minimal, it is advised to rogue out the few affected plants. This is best achieved by placing the rouged plants into a container or sack for transporting out of the field after which plants should be buried or burnt. Additionally, if the crop is still young or recently topped, it is advisable to apply Bion (acibenzolar-S-

methyl) at the rate of 60 g/200 L of water/ha. Bion is not a cure for PVY, but will boost the immune system of the plant, helping it to better fight off the disease. Research is currently under way to identify other possible remedies.

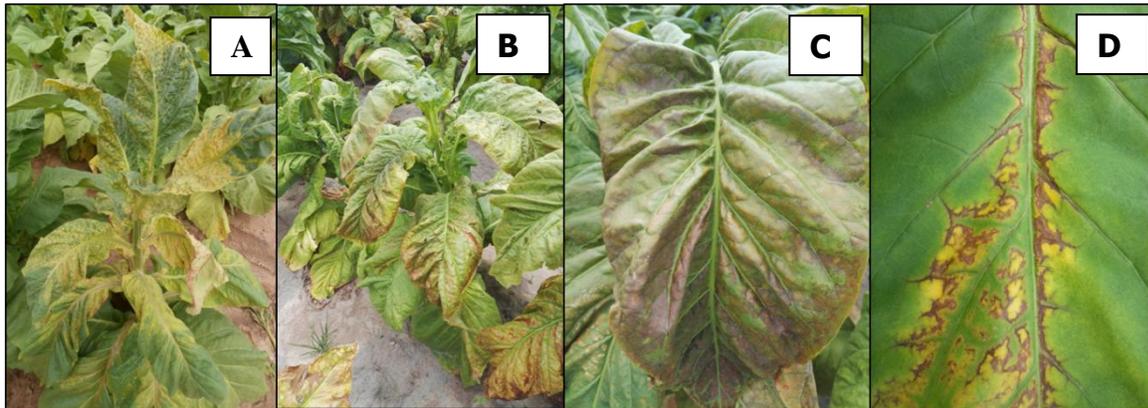


Fig. 1: Potato Virus Y diseased plant (A), bronzing symptoms (B, C) and necrotic veins (D)

For more information, contact Kutsaga Research Station's Plant Health Services Division on telephone #(04)2575 289/94 or toll-free, 08004511 or Email: tobres@kutsaga.co.zw or visit Kutsaga Research Station.

Yours sincerely,

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Plant Health Services Division
For and on behalf of Tobacco Research Board