



TOBACCO RESEARCH BOARD

KUTSAGA

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Dear Grower

POTATO VIRUS Y ALERT

There have been several reports of PVY in tobacco field crops around the tobacco growing areas. The occurrence of PVY has been observed sooner than expected in normal seasons. Symptoms of both the necrotic and mosaic strains (Fig 1), which can cause significant yield losses, have been observed. Tobacco cultivars in Zimbabwe do not yet have resistance to PVY although efforts are currently under way to breed for resistance.

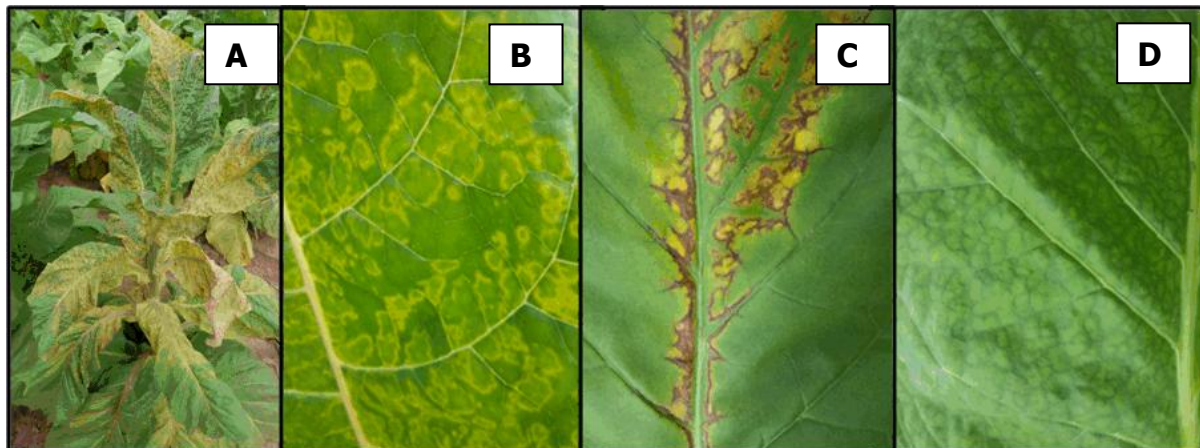


Fig 1: Potato Virus Y diseased plant (A), characteristic symptoms showing chlorotic rings (B), necrotic veins (C) and vein banding (D)

PVY is mainly transmitted by aphids, although recent work indicates that it can also be mechanically transmitted by workers, farm implements and leaf-to-leaf contact. As such farmers are encouraged to rigorously control insect pests, especially aphids, in their crops. Additionally, growers are encouraged to maintain strict hygiene when carrying out farm operations. In the event that growers do encounter PVY infected plants (Fig 1), they are advised to immediately rogue out the plants while carefully avoiding contact with other uninfected plants. This is best achieved by placing the rogued plants into a container or sack for transporting out of the field after which plants should be buried or burnt.

For more information, contact Kutsaga Research Station's Plant Health Services Division on telephone # (04) 575 289/94 or toll-free, 08004511 or Email: tobres@kutsaga.co.zw or visit Kutsaga Research Station.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in gold ink, appearing to read 'Dr Cleopas C. Chinheya', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Dr Cleopas C. Chinheya

For and on behalf of Tobacco Research Board