

Pepper ringspot virus testing

Ensure that your seed potatoes are virus free

Over the last 4 years, **Pepper ringspot virus (PepRSV)** was found to infect potato crops in South Africa. To date, PepRSV has only been reported from Brazil, where it infects pepper, tomato, artichoke and *Bidens* weed species. PepRSV is not reported to infect potatoes in Brazil but in SA, PepRSV was found to cause brown arcs and flecks in the tuber, which is referred to as spraing. In potato, the related TRV can also cause the spraing disease and is found in Europe, North America, Japan and Brazil and cause diseases in potato and ornamental bulbs (narcissus, gladiolus, tulip, lily, and crocus).



Symptoms: Potato tuber showing (a) external and (b) internal spraing symptoms caused by TRV infection, (c) foliar mosaic and chlorosis symptoms caused by PepRSV and (d) internal arcs and flecks caused by PepRSV.

PepRSV occurrence to date, confirmed in:

- Free State (Warden, Kroonstad, Bultfontein, Theunissen, Bethlehem, Christiana, Bloemhof)
- Limpopo (Dendron, Polokwane)
- North West (Skeerpoort)
- KwaZulu Natal (Moorivier)

Cultivars affected thus far:

- Mondial, Sifra, Panamera and Allison

Method of transmission in potatoes:

- TRV is mechanically- and nematode transmitted (*Nanidorus minor*)
- PepRSV expected to be mechanically and nematode transmitted
- Infected seed tubers

Ensure you are planting PepRSV free potatoes this season!

The ARC is offering PepRSV testing of seed potatoes, so that producers can ensure they start the production season with virus free planting material. Arrange testing of your seed potatoes by contacting Dr Lindy Esterhuizen at ARC, Roodeplaat.

The first tests will be free of charge. esterhuizenl@arc.agric.za 0825759827