

SURVEY OF APHID INFESTATION AND VIRAL INFECTION OF POTATOES IN SYRIA

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ABSTRACT

The occurrence of aphids and viral diseases on potatoes in Syria was examined. Aphids were trapped in a yellow pan with water at the Tissue Culture Laboratory of the General Organization for Seed Multiplication (GOSM), Al Eeramoun, from June, 2006 to June, 2007. The number of winged aphids trapped increased slightly in autumn and markedly in spring. On autumn-cultivated potato plants in the Aleppo and Hama areas, aphid densities increased from mid-October to early November, just before the harvest, in 2006. On spring-cultivated potatoes, aphid densities decreased from late May, although the densities were higher in mid-April, just after sprouting, in 2007. Virus-infected plants were common among both autumn- and spring-cultivated potatoes in fields not contracted to GOSM, but were few in contracted fields in which virus-free plants grew. Aphid species belonging to 13 genera, including *Myzus persicae*, *Aphis gossypii*, *A. fabae*, *A. craccivora*, *Schizaphis borealis* and *Lipaphis erysimi*, were identified among aphid samples collected from potato plants. In addition, *Rhopalosiphum rufiabdominalis* was found on rhizomes and roots of potato plants in GOSM greenhouses in 2007. The major aphids as potato pests were considered to be *M. persicae* and *A. gossypii*, and *A. fabae* to a lesser extent. To our knowledge, this is the first report of *A. fabae* and *R. rufiabdominalis* infesting potatoes in Syria.

Key words: *Myzus persicae*, *Aphis gossypii*, *Aphis fabae*, yellow pan, *Potato Virus Y*