

Development Of A Fungicide Spray For The Control Of *Ascochyta* Blight In Grain Legumes

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The Victorian Institute for Dryland Agriculture has tested a new AgrEvo product on fieldpeas and lentils for *Ascochyta* control activity.

Results of preliminary tests show the fungicide has excellent activity against this fungal disease. In glasshouse experiments at VIDA a single foliar spray, when plants were at three to four leaf stage, prevented *Ascochyta* developing. Further testing of the fungicide in field trials during 1996 will determine the final rate and commercial applicability in pea crops.

In the past it has been uneconomic to apply foliar sprays to field peas to control *Ascochyta*. The fungal disease causes lodging, loss of leaves, stem infection and pod damage in the lower part of the plants, which lowers grain yield. Under certain conditions, yield losses of up to 80% may occur.

The new AgrEvo fungicide is registered in France for use on field peas to combat *Botrytis* in addition to *Ascochyta*. In France, these diseases occur later in the season than in Victoria. *Ascochyta* and *Botrytis* sprays are applied at flowering and again at 15 days afterwards. In 42 field plots, which were, which compared treated and untreated field peas, yield improvements averaged nine percent when both diseases were present. In four trials under severe *Ascochyta* attack, the improvement was 19 percent.

The potential use of the new AgrEvo fungicide in Australia will be as a single spray, six weeks after emergence, when seed treatment activity ceases. Protection of stems and young leaves will ensure higher yielding, upright, healthy plants.