

## Russian Wheat Aphid Found in Australia

### High priority notifiable pest identified in South Australia

During May this year an infestation of Russian wheat aphid (*Diuraphis noxia*), was found on a property at Tarlee in South Australia. Since then further infestations have been found on properties within a 1,400 square kilometre radius of the initial outbreak.

The Russian wheat aphid is a high priority notifiable pest of the grains industry, and as such is seen as a pest which would have serious consequences if it were to enter and become established in Australia. It is a pest found in the major cereal producing regions of the globe but has not been detected in Australia previously.

The hosts of the Russian wheat aphid include wheat, barley, triticale and oats. Weeds and other grass species may also be hosts. This pest may be present throughout the season. It has an elongated body up to 2mm in length. The aphid is a pale yellowish-green to grey-green in colour. The Russian wheat aphid can be transported by wind or on machinery. The insect injects toxins into the plant which causes discolouration and stunts growth. Affected plants will show whitish, yellow and red streak marks and rolling leaves.

The Plant Health Australia fact sheet on Russian Wheat Aphid is available at

<http://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/wp-content/uploads/2013/01/Russian-wheat-aphid-how-to-recognise-it.pdf>

The NSW DPI fact sheet reports that the Russian wheat aphid has the potential to cause yield losses of 80 percent or more in wheat and barley. It is also a minor pest of oats, rye, sorghum and triticale and a vector of barley yellow dwarf virus, brome mosaic virus and barley stripe mosaic virus.

The insect is adapted to semi-arid dryland climates where annual rainfall is usually less than 600 mm, so could easily establish and survive across many of Australia's grain growing regions.

Biosecurity officers in NSW, Qld and nationally are working proactively to prevent further spread of this pest.

In **NSW** if aphids or symptoms are found, they need to be immediately reported through the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline on 1800 084 881**. Photos of symptoms or aphids can be sent to [biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au](mailto:biosecurity@dpi.nsw.gov.au). Timely reporting of this pest if found in NSW will increase our chances of containment and minimise its spread.

In **Queensland** if growers observe anything unusual or any signs of damage, particularly if crops show whitish, yellow or red/purple leaf markings and rolling leaves, report it immediately to the **Exotic Plant Pest Hotline** or **Biosecurity Queensland on 13 25 23**. Photos of symptoms/aphids can be sent to: [plantpestdiagnostics@daf.qld.gov.au](mailto:plantpestdiagnostics@daf.qld.gov.au)

#### References:

Exotic Pest Alert: Identification of Russian Wheat Aphid and associated crop damage: <http://www.dpi.nsw.gov.au/content/agriculture/broadacre/pests-diseases/12-winter-crops-pests-and-diseases/russian-wheat-aphid>

Industry alert – Russian wheat aphid found in South Australia: <https://www.daf.qld.gov.au/plants/health-pests-diseases/industry-alert-russian-wheat-aphid-found-in-south-australia>

<http://www.planthealthaustralia.com.au/national-programs/grains-farm-biosecurity-program/grains-pests/>  
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