
SESVanderHave brings first SBR tolerant sugar beet varieties to market

The sugar beet disease 'Syndrome Basses Richesses' or SBR, has reappeared in Europe. Since chemical control is impossible, SESVanderHave, one of the leading sugar beet breeding companies, has now identified a genetic solution. With the varieties FITIS and KAKADU they are bringing the first SBR tolerant sugar beet varieties on the market.

SBR is an emerging sugar beet disease that is known for strongly reducing sugar content (up to 5°) and root yield (up to 25%) in sugar beet. SBR can therefore cause significant economic losses for growers and the sugar industry and in some cases, it threatens the viability of the crop. In Switzerland and Germany 2500 and 30,000 ha respectively were infected in 2020.

SBR symptoms include yellowing of older leaves, lanceolated asymmetrical young leaves and necrosis of vascular root bundles. However, these symptoms can easily be confused with other biotic or abiotic stress factors. The disease is caused by two plant pathogenic bacteria and is transmitted by the planthopper *Pentastiridius leporinus*. Since chemical control of this planthopper is impossible, SESVanderHave explored the possibilities of a genetic solution.

In order to find out whether sugar beet genetics could provide a solution, SESVanderHave set up screenings. These screenings showed a clear difference in SBR tolerance between varieties. This variation also allows further screening and selection. Meanwhile, the first results of the efforts are known: in February 2021, the first SBR tolerant varieties FITIS and KAKADU were registered on the German variety list. Both varieties are nematode tolerant and especially FITIS performs extremely well under SBR infection. KAKADU on the other hand is an all-rounder and has, in addition to SBR tolerance, also a good cercospora tolerance.

With these brand-new and innovative varieties, SESVanderHave has delivered the first genetic solutions for growers and the sugar industry in areas suffering from SBR. More information on SBR and the new SBR tolerant varieties can be found on <https://www.sesvanderhave.com/our-research-and-innovations/breeding-for-you/pests-and-diseases/sbr>.

Contact:

Eva Laudes – Communication Officer

eva.laudes@sesvanderhave.com

Tel.: 016 808 317

<http://www.sesvanderhave.com>

