Mediaportal Report

29/11/2012

Phosphine research:
The Land, 29/11/12, General News, Page 48
By: None

Article Information
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Fumigant research
The Land, 22/11/12, General News, Page 71
By: None

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New WQA boss
Stock & Land, 15/11/12, General News, Page 23
By: Gregor Heard

Article Information
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Pest resistance breakthrough
Countryman, 15/11/12, General News, Page 25
By: None

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Phosphine research: New research has identified the gene responsible for an insect's resistance to phosphine – a major fumigant used by Australia's grain industry.

A collaborative effort of scientists from the University of Queensland (UQ) and the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Queensland (DAFFQ) has made the discovery that will allow farmers and grain handlers to more effectively manage this problem.

First author of the study Dr David Schlipalius, a scientist at UQ's School of Biological Sciences and DAFFQ, said problem insects could now be detected even before an outbreak of resistance occurred.

"Phosphine fumigation is the most effective and flexible means of controlling pest infestations during grain storage and handling," Dr Schlipalius said.

Dr Schlipalius said prolonging the effective life and availability of phosphine was in the interests of the global grain industry and the world's food security.
Fumigant research: Research has identified the gene responsible for insect resistance to phosphine, a major fumigant used by Australia’s grain industry.

A collaborative effort by the University of Queensland (UQ) and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Queensland (DAFFQ) has made the discovery that will allow farmers and grain handlers to more effectively manage the problem.

The first author of the study, UQ and DAFFQ scientist Dr David Schlipalius, said problem insects could now be detected before an outbreak of resistance occurred.
New WQA boss
WHEAT Quality Australia (WQA) has appointed a new chief executive in Robert Burbury.
Mr Burbury will be the organisation’s first chief executive.
He has a background in the dairy and fertiliser sectors.
WQA is the independent classifier of wheat varieties in Australia, providing assurance to buyers and consumers about wheat processing and end quality.

New app
GRAINCORP has launched a new app for iPhones featuring pricing information.
GrainCorp storage and logistics general manager Nigel Hart said the app was free to download.
“GrainCorp’s app puts information and power directly into the hands of the growers,” he said.
“It gives them instant access to all of the many prices posted at our silos.”

WA competition
REPORTS from Western Australia say a Chinese business is looking to bypass CBH’s grain port facilities to export grain.
CBH, the WA-based co-op, has an iron grip on exports out of Australia’s largest wheat-producing State.
However, it is believed grain will be exported through an Albany port facility owned by a joint venture between logistics business Asciano and Japanese company Itochu.
In additional to this, there could be further competition in WA in the form of a port at Bunbury, with Bunge on the record as saying it was interested in investing in infrastructure in the south-west coastal town.

Foodbank donation
GRAINCORP has partnered with Foodbank Australia, the country’s largest food relief organisation, to enable growers to make a donation with the aim of creating a grain bank as a source of supply for manufacturing key staple foods.
These foods are distributed to the charities around Australia that provide food relief to people in hardship.
In a simple but crucial scheme, Foodbank is asking growers to enter into a donation contract with GrainCorp to donate a parcel of grain – either left over in silos from last season or straight from the new harvest just starting to roll in.
Often a grower’s leftover grain is too small a quantity for commercial sale, but it is when donated to Foodbank the amounts soon add up.
As little as one tonne of any grade is welcomed and for donations under 10t, GrainCorp has agreed to waive all storage fees for the transfer.

Phosphine research
NEW research has identified the gene responsible for an insect’s resistance to a major fumigant used by Australia’s grain industry.
A collaborative effort by scientists at The University of Queensland (UQ) and the Queensland Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Queensland (DAFFQ) has made the discovery, which should allow farmers and grain handlers to more effectively manage this problem.
First author of the study Dr David Schlipalius, a scientist at UQ’s School of Biological Sciences and DAFFQ, said problem insects could now be detected even before resistance occurred.
Dr Schlipalius said prolonging the life and availability of phosphine – the most effective and flexible fumigant in grain storage and handling – was in the interests of the global grain industry and world food security.
Pest resistance breakthrough

Research published in the journal Science has identified the gene responsible for an insect's resistance to the fumigant phosphine.

The discovery was a collaborative effort of scientists from the University of Queensland (UQ) and the Department of Agriculture, Fisheries and Forestry Queensland (DAFFQ), supported by the CRC for National Plant Biosecurity. It is hoped the research will allow farmers and grain handlers to more effectively manage this problem.

First author of the study David Schlipalius, a scientist at UQ's School of Biological Sciences and DAFFQ, said problem insects could now be detected even before an outbreak of resistance occurred.

“Phosphine fumigation is the most effective and flexible means of controlling pest infestations during grain storage and handling,” Dr Schlipalius said.

“It is the most common treatment for grain and other commodities worldwide because it is cheap, can be used on many commodities and doesn't leave toxic residues.”

Dr Schlipalius said prolonging the effective life and availability of phosphine was in the interests of the global grain industry and the world’s food security.

Paul Ebert, from UQ's School of Biological Sciences, said resistance occurred when genetic variants among the original pest insects survive phosphine fumigation and reproduce, generating a population of resistant offspring.

“The discovery of the resistance gene is the first step in identifying ways in which the resistant insects are also vulnerable — their Achilles heel, so to speak,” Dr Ebert said.

Instrumental in tracking down the gene was work performed on the model organism, Caenorhabditis elegans (C. elegans), commonly known as nematode roundworms, led by Massimo Hilliard and Nick Valmas at UQ's Queensland Brain Institute.

“The discovered gene was able to confer resistance in several species of insects and in nematodes, which indicated its importance across evolution,” Dr Valmas said.

Horst Schirra, from UQ's Centre for Advanced Imaging, said the study also helped shed light on how resistance affected the metabolism of roundworms and insects.

“This allows us to better understand how resistance develops and will provide insights into possibilities for new fumigants, or treatments that may block the resistance,” Dr Schirra said.

Dr Collins said phosphine resistance would be a disaster for countries that heavily relied on the fumigant, including Australia where 80 per cent of cereal grains are treated by phosphine fumigation.

“It would mean the introduction of much less effective and more expensive treatments, significantly increasing the price and reducing availability of grain,” he said.