

Fixing fungicide resistance in horticulture

Potatoes

23.10.2017



Senior Solutions Development Manager, Scott Mathew

When advising growers, consultants and product distributors on how to reduce fungicide resistance in horticulture crops, Syngenta Senior Solutions Lead, Scott Mathew, says his message is always the same.

“Overuse and misuse of fungicide products are still the biggest causes of fungicide resistance in Australian horticultural crops.”

“We’re constantly reinforcing those two drivers with everyone in the horticultural production chain, from our sales team, to the distribution network and then right down to grower level, and talking about what can be done about it.”

As part of Syngenta’s Australian team responsible for developing new industry-leading solutions to treat key disease issues like powdery mildew, Scott says the effectiveness of disease control not only relies on the choice of chemistry but also how that chemistry is applied to the crop.

“In horticulture, growers have a fair number of choices in what they can use. However, it is generally a lack of understanding which results in too many applications of the same fungicide Mode of Action groups being used, and these products are often applied incorrectly.

“A good example is when a product has been designed and is best suited to be used as a protectant fungicide, that is before any symptoms of the disease are present, but the fungicide ends up being

applied to an established infection.

“This means the disease is at a more advanced stage, is stronger and able to fight back harder, which increases the chances of future fungicide resistance.”

Reducing the risk is as simple as always following the instructions on the label, says Scott.

“Read the label thoroughly. It has all the information on how to use the product correctly, including when to apply it, the number of applications, the rate of application and how to use it effectively either before disease or when the crop is under disease pressure.”

Scott says three things need to be considered before applying a product: what the problem is that you are trying to solve, the timing for the solution and the location for application.

“Firstly, you need to choose the right product for the disease you are trying to control.

“Then, with timing, if you’re applying a preventative solution, you need to apply it before the disease is evident.

“Even if you choose the right product and apply it at the right time, if you are trying to control a disease that thrives inside the crop, and you apply it only to the outside of the crop, then chance are high that it won’t work.

“You need to apply it where the problem is and at the right rate for that disease situation,” he says.

“If you can identify what you are trying to control, when you need to control it and where you need to apply it, you are giving the product the best opportunity to do the job you need it to do and achieve control.”

Getting the application of fungicides right allow Syngenta to continue to help growers farm today, for tomorrow, says Scott.