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New measures to combat citrus black spot

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It costs SA growers R1bn per year to adhere to CBS risk management system procedures. Source: Manstrat_AIS

In a new development to combat citrus black spot (CBS), biological pest control company River Bioscience has announced the registration of a new CBS control product.

“Regulation applicable to South African citrus entering the European Union (EU) requires 100% control of CBS on export fruit to the EU,” said Citrus Growers’ Association (CGA) CEO Justin Chadwick. “Commercially acceptable levels of control of CBS can only be achieved through the use of plant protection products.”

He noted that the control of CBS was difficult as most of the products available on the market used the same active ingredients.

Chadwick pointed out that the repeated application of the same products could result in the development of a resistance to the fungicides which was detrimental to pest management. Additionally, these products were usually harmful to beneficial insects.

The fungicide, called RB1, offers citrus growers the ability to reduce the chances of resistance as it is the only product on the market using dipotassium phosphate as an active ingredient. It would allow for the use of beneficial insects for the control of other pests as it is considered a “soft” product.

Last month the citrus industry voted to suspend the export of citrus to the EU – except for soft citrus and exports from the Western and Northern Cape – to minimise the risk of CBS and ensure continued access to the EU market in future.

This after the EU announced its intention to implement new legislation that would see stricter measures imposed on citrus imports.

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