

BPH and virus diseases spread to Chainat and Suphan Buri provinces

by

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Close up of virus infected plant

Caption: BPH and virus caused 60% loss in Suphan Buri 4 in Uthai Tani.

In December 2009, we saw heavy infestations of virus diseases, rice grassy stunt (RGSV) and rice ragged stunt (RRSV) in provinces, Khampaengphet, Phichit and Pitsanulok). A lot of the diseased fields were abandoned and could have been sources of virus spread. Farmers in Chainat and Suphan Buri were beginning to establish their 2010 crops. Despite the heavy insecticide spraying promoted by the control campaigns, BPH populations remain high. Natural biological control of BPH is low because of the heavy use of resurgence causing pesticides, like abamectin, cypermethrin and chlorpyrifos. The virus diseases appeared to have spread south to Chainat and Suphan Buri. Many of the farmers here do not recognize the diseases as they had never had such problems before.

The report of the Rice Department for the week ending on 20 February 2010 showed that the most severely affected province was Suphan Buri with about 202,000 rai (32,300 ha). In Chainat about 12,000 rai (1,920 ha) were severely affected which had declined from 110,000 rai (18,000 ha) reported in the previous week.



Caption: Hopperburn fields in Chainat province

Meanwhile, insecticide use remains high as farmers are desperately attempting to “protect” their crops from BPH and virus diseases. However such actions might have more destructive effects on the natural control mechanisms and further prolong or make the problem worse.

In Uthai Thani, a farmer Madam Somchai Khangkhed, grew varieties, Suphan Buri 4 and Phitsanulok 2 in her 50 rai (8 ha). She sprayed her field 8 times but yet had a 60% loss (> 20 tons). She had used her savings to pay for the pesticides, but many of her neighbors had to borrow between US\$ 280 to 2800 each from the village fund.