Role of Seed-Borne Infection in Rhynchosporium Epidemics in Barley

Amarnath Thirugnanasambandam¹, Adrian Newton¹, Steve Whisson¹, Kath Wright¹, Neil Havis² and Simon Atkins³.

¹Scottish Crop Research Institute, Invergowrie, Dundee, DD2 5DA.
²Scottish Agricultural College, West Mains Road, Edinburgh EH9 3JG.
³Rothamsted Research, Harpenden, Herts, AL5 2JQ.
Email: athiru@scri.ac.uk

Acknowledgements:
This project is jointly funded by HGCA, SCRI and Rothamsted Research.

Background
Rhynchosporium is the most damaging disease of barley. *Rhynchosporium secalis* can complete its life cycle within a host without producing any visible symptoms. A greater understanding of the epidemiology of this pathogen, how it spreads during the symptomless phases of its life cycle, the role of seed-borne infection and subsequent proliferation and spread, will assist resistance breeding, improve guidance to farmers for control measures and help optimize fungicide application.

Transformation
*Agrobacterium tumefaciens*-mediated transformation of *R. secalis* using two pathogenicity-characterised isolates was done by co-cultivating high concentration of *R. secalis* spores with *A. tumefaciens* in the presence of acetylsyringone. The transformed colonies were selected on minimal media containing hygromycin.

Time Series Experiment

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**Summary**
- An efficient transformation protocol for *R. secalis* has been developed. Two different isolates have been transformed with Green Fluorescent Protein and Red Fluorescent Protein.
- *R. secalis* grows in both susceptible and resistant cultivars but shows different colony morphology.
- Use of propidium iodide during imaging helps distinguish living and senescent mycelia in infections.

Future Prospects
- Observations made during the asymptomatic phase will help to identify and understand different Rhynchosporium resistance genes in barley and their potential use in breeding.
- Tools developed in this project will aid in identifying the mechanisms of seed-plant-seed infection.
- This study will be helpful for devising variety-specific crop protection strategies (fungicide application and timing).