

The development of a comprehensive and applicable guide for black cherry aphid control will help fruit growers protect their orchards

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At the request of the National Branch Chamber “Fruits and Vegetables”, on 17 December 2024 an expert meeting was held at the Bulgarian Food Safety Agency (BFSA) to develop a rapid and comprehensive approach to addressing the problem of the increasing population of the pest flatheaded root-borer (*Capnodis tenebrionis*) in permanent crops, the Agency reports.

In recent years, the trend in the development of *Capnodis tenebrionis* has been towards a gradual expansion of its distribution range and an increase in the number of attacked and destroyed plants. The pest is on the rise

and shows growth in its population and spread. This problem has been brewing, but during the 2024 growing season it is strongly manifested, as a result of the mild winter and extremely high temperatures in spring and summer.



According to data from the Association of Fruit Growers in Bulgaria, in approximately 30% of the orchards in Eastern Bulgaria serious damage has already been caused by the pest. The most affected by the flatheaded root-borer are the fruit trees in the municipalities of Radnevo, Chirpan, Bratya Daskalovi and Stara Zagora.

This necessitates the urgent development, within short time limits, of a comprehensive and applicable guideline for the control of the flatheaded root-borer. According to the BFSA, the guideline must be ready by **15 February 2025**.

In addition to the fruit growers, the meeting was attended by the Deputy Minister of Agriculture and Food Yanislav Yanchev, the Deputy Executive Director of the BFSA Prof. Dr. Olya Karadzhova, experts from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food and the Agency, as well as representatives of branch organizations of fruit producers.

Prof. Dr. Olya Karadzhova informed that, in order to deal with the situation, **two working groups have been established, one on biological agents and one on the development of measures for pest control**. The main focus of the participants in the two groups is the updating of the list of biological agents that can be applied

on the territory of the Republic of Bulgaria and the development of a Guideline for the implementation of measures for the control of the flatheaded root-borer (*Capnodis tenebrionis*).

Deputy Minister Yanislav Yanchev emphasized the significance of the problem, stating that fruit production is important for food security. “The problem can be solved only through rapid actions and a comprehensive approach on the part of the Ministry of Agriculture and Food, the BFSA and agricultural producers,” he pointed out.

During the discussion it became clear that the first working group has identified bioagents (entomopathogenic nematodes) that can be used for the control of the flatheaded root-borer. An official order by the Ministers of Agriculture and Food and of Environment and Water for their application is expected.

The main objective of the working group related to the measures for pest control remains that by 15 February 2025 a **comprehensive and applicable guideline for the control of the flatheaded root-borer** be developed, which will help fruit growers to protect their orchards.

Prof. Karadzhova added that, at a meeting of the Plant Protection Products Council at the BFSA, **five plant protection products** were approved. Two of them are suitable for organic production and three for conventional production, and these products are expected to be authorized for use for the control of the flatheaded root-borer.

Producers received information on the procedures at the BFSA for the authorization of plant protection products, including the extension of the scope of authorization for plant protection products (minor use) and for the limited and controlled use of plant protection products for a period of 120 days, in accordance with the applicable provisions.

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