

The health status of cereal crops is a stress test for the professional competence of the producer

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How could a high health status of the cultivated agricultural crops be achieved under these extreme conditions? The most reliable way is for modern, innovative and intensive plant protection to come into play. The global agrochemical industry offers in our country a rich arsenal of effective means for the protection of agricultural crops. The question is whether this powerful agro-pharmaceutical format can be used to its full potential. The answer is unequivocally one-directional: it depends on the professional competence of the producer!

The production of cereal crops (as well as of all others) is carried out in an uncertain climatic and phytosanitary environment. Moreover, this situation is constantly becoming more complex and changing in an unfavorable direction, the aggression of local and invasive pests continues to grow like an avalanche, challenges are accumulating... Yellow rust and septoria in wheat, net blotch and

leaf scorch in barley, and grass weeds in Northern Bulgaria are eloquent examples confirming this statement.

How could a high health status of the cultivated agricultural crops be achieved under these extreme conditions? The most reliable way is for modern, innovative and intensive plant protection to come into play. The global agrochemical industry offers in our country a rich arsenal of effective means for the protection of agricultural crops. The question is whether this powerful agro-pharmaceutical format can be used to its full potential. The answer is unequivocally one-directional: it depends on the professional competence of the producer! In this case, we will not comment on the degree of agronomic qualities and competencies of the farmers. Under the conditions of private agriculture in our country, this concept is burdened with many reservations and speculations. The topic is not the focus of this publication. Today we will take the opportunity to direct the attention of both the reader and the administration in another direction.

As we have already noted, the key to achieving a high health status of agricultural crops is modern plant protection. It is a guarantor for achieving sustainable growth under conditions of biotic and abiotic imbalances. The point, however, is that it is by no means sufficient to take advantage of the easy opportunity to acquire a powerful weapon – a plant protection product. More important is to know how to use this product to its full extent – against whom, when and how. We are talking about specific technologies, about real-time information exchange. In other words: it is about an objective assessment of the phytosanitary situation and the definition of a roadmap with workable solutions.

One of the possibilities for this to happen is the use of scientific information accumulated at the Agricultural University in Plovdiv. In this case, a significant point is how this vital information can reach all producers. We mean – the medium and small producers, since the large producers are privileged by the agrochemical companies. As engaged partners, these companies provide them with information through various channels – at seminars, on-site consultations, professional literature, etc.

It was not so long ago when the National Plant Protection Service and the Institute of Plant Protection had both the capacity and the competencies to create and transfer information about the phytosanitary situation and the possible courses of action against pests. The state administration managed in the most successful possible way to marginalize these units and practically exclude them from the national plant protection system. The short-sighted and inadequate policy deprived national agriculture of its sources of information, which were the backbone of its professional competence. Today, more than ever, it is necessary for this administration, which has demonstrated to the agricultural community that it is capable of irrational behavior and of reproducing defects, to be immunized with an antidote so that it can assume its role as defender of the state interests in this sector. And the interest of the state is that scientific information on plant protection should reach every producer, regardless of his scale! Its stagnation in university offices turns it into an expensive trinket that nobody needs.