Virus-resistant wheat could aid UK farmers denied access to neonicotinoid insecticides

RAGT Seeds is to launch a winter wheat variety with a high level of resistance to barley yellow dwarf virus (BYDV) to the UK market next autumn, offering farmers an alternative to chemical control for the first time.

The introduction of RGT Wolverine marks a major breakthrough in European variety development and is particularly timely following the withdrawal in 2018 of neonicotinoid seed treatments for wheat, which has left growers relying on less effective insecticide sprays to control aphid vectors, according to RAGT.

Crucially, the variety is capable of delivering exceptional yields even in the absence of BYDV and is backed by a strong agronomic package, so growers will not be penalized for choosing it in low-disease years, says RAGT's cereal and OSR product manager Tom Dummett.

"RAGT is the first breeder in Europe to offer a BYDV-resistant wheat, and the trait is now successfully established in some of our elite material."

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RGT Wolverine's resistance originates from a goat grass, Thinopyrum intermedium, a distant wheat relative. A genetic segment from Thinopyrum containing the resistance gene Bdv2 has been translocated onto a wheat chromosome via an Australian research line known as TC14.

Read full, original article: RAGT to launch BYDV-resistant wheat