Cercospora leaf spot and clover viruses

Cercospora leaf spot

Summary

Caused by the fungus *Cercospora zebrina*, cerospora leaf spot (CLS) is more common in summer and autumn, mostly in the North Island.

Identification

Circular brown, sometimes striped, lesions appear on the leaves.

Spread

The disease persists on decaying plant material in the base of pastures. Spores of the fungal pathogen are produced in warm, moist weather and spread by wind.

Prevention and management

Graze pastures before they become rank.

Clover viruses

Summary

Several viruses that attack clover are often seen together, including:

- **White clover mosaic virus**
- **Alfalfa mosaic virus**
- **Soybean dwarf virus**
- **Clover yellow vein virus**
- **Bean yellow mosaic virus**
- **Watermelon virus**

Alfalfa mosaic virus on white clover.

Identification

Virus symptoms are not always obvious and vary from leaf mottling, distortion, crinkling and size reduction to plant stunting. Damage depends on clover species, age of the stand, location and the virus present. Moderate reductions in forage quality and production are possible. Stress from virus infections may lead to plant damage or death from other pathogens or pests.

Spread

Viruses are spread by mechanical damage (mowing, trampling and feeding by stock), aphid feeding and seed.

Prevention and management

Little can be done to eliminate virus infections in clover. Sowing varieties that are well adapted to a region reduces plant stress and virus susceptibility.