Management of hot pepper Viruses: New information and different practices to consider

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[Abstract]
Scotch Bonnet pepper production in Jamaica faces numerous production constraints of which the mosaic disease is of paramount importance. The non persistent aphid-borne viruses, tobacco etch and potato virus Y are the primary pathogens involved. Both are found naturally occurring in mixed or single infections within the crop. There is in fact no single solution to the highly complex and widespread problem of viruses on hot pepper in Jamaica. Both short term and long term integrated pest management (IPM) strategies directed at the aphid vector and viral pathogens as well as the virus-vector host plant complex must be implemented. Short term strategies may involve delaying or reducing virus spread. This may be achieved by: (1) altering vector efficiencies, whether by interfering with the landing behaviour of the aphid vector or the transmission process; (2) practicing field sanitation with the elimination of virus reservoirs; and (3) ensuring that the vulnerability of the crop to infection is reduced. Long term strategies primarily include the development of tolerant or resistant Scotch Bonnet varieties. Proper integration of these strategies should contribute towards the management of the disease. Some promising areas being explored are discussed.

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