PRESS RELEASE

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Innovative raspberry beetle trap available this season

Damage from raspberry beetle (*Byturus tomentosus*) is a major cause of rejected fruit, the problem being that it often goes undetected until the fruit is picked. A new monitoring trap, available to growers this season, provides a vital tool for managing raspberry beetle populations and minimising damage to crops.

Developed at the Scottish Crop Research Institute (SCRI), as part of a government HortLink project in partnership with East Malling, the Natural Resource Institute and ADAS; the trap has been developed to look like a giant raspberry flower. It is being brought to market by manufacturer and commercial partner, AgriSense, a UK company with twenty-five years experience in innovative pest solutions and the trap will be distributed in the UK by Agralan.

"The new trap will help growers meet the rising demand for pesticide-free fresh produce by enabling them to monitor raspberry beetle numbers and find hot-spots in crops, so that insecticides can be applied only as and when

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needed," explains project leader Dr Nick Birch, senior entomologist at SCRI. An added benefit is that the raspberry beetles, when caught, are removed from the crop – permanently. If traps are present in sufficient numbers, this can have a useful effect on the background population of the pest.

Monitoring traps for raspberry beetle are not a new idea but this innovative design has proved to be up to three times more effective than sticky traps. Raspberry beetles are attracted to the artificial 'flower' by a scent that mimics the smell of the flowering plant. The cross-vane trap funnels the raspberry beetle into a container of soapy water where they are contained and unable to damage the crop.

Growers need to get traps out into raspberry crops to cover the period from first emergence of the pest to flowering of the crop. "Raspberry beetles over-winter as pupae in the soil and emerge in the spring, initially feeding on the lower leaves (primocanes) of plants," says Dr Birch. "When the temperature reaches approximately 13-15ºC, they begin to fly and lay their eggs on flowers, where their larvae then hatch and cause damage to flowers and ripening fruit."

Enzo Casagrande, technical director at AgriSense, emphasizes that the trap is not a control measure but a vital tool for growers to improve timeliness of insecticide application and eliminate unnecessary pesticide treatments.

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“Thresholds for spray treatment are still in development; but as a guide, when a trap catch of between five and ten beetles is recorded on weekly inspection during the monitoring period, growers should consider using an approved insecticide for raspberry beetle control,” he explains. “This is however only a guide and growers will need to refine threshold levels according to their own production systems and local pest pressure.”

For further information growers should contact:

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