

INFLUENCE OF WEATHER FACTORS ON THE INCIDENCE OF LATE BLIGHT OF POTATO

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The incidence of late blight in potato (*Phytophthora infestans* (Mont) de Bary) is strongly influenced by weather factors.

The course of the disease was monitored during the seasons *Maha* 1981/82, *Yala* 1982 and *Maha* 1982/83 at Sita Eliya with plantings of the susceptible variety Vekaro exposed to infection under natural conditions. Disease incidence was assessed using Key 3.1.2 of British Mycological Society.

Disease progress curves were mathematically transformed using logistic transformation and fitted by simple linear regression lines. The slope of the regression line gave the 'r' value, Vanderplank's average apparent infection rate. 'r' value varied each season. The weather factors rainfall, relative humidity and sunshine hours were found to have a marked influence on the 'r' value and determined the variable severity of the attack of the epidemic during the three cultivation seasons.