

**B-15: Management of *Thanatephorus cucumeris* on *Hevea* seedlings (a new record) in Sri Lanka**

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*Thanatephorus cucumeris*, the telemorph of *Rhizoctonia solani* Kuhn is an ubiquitous fungus that causes many types of diseases on numerous plants under diverse environmental conditions. Target leaf spot of *Hevea brasiliensis* Muell. Arg. caused by *T. cucumeris* is regarded as a serious leaf disease in the states of Amazonas and Para in Brazil.

During 1991 and 1992 attention was drawn to a similar condition to target leaf spot disease on *Hevea* seedlings in 3 nurseries. The most conspicuous symptom on the affected leaves, petioles and stems was a network of silvery mycelium. The infected leaves become brownish and papery. These leaves fall off or hung down from mycelial threads. At the advanced stages die back symptoms appeared resulting in death of the whole plant. The hypocotyls of the seedlings were also affected, leading to the destruction of seed germination beds.

The casual organism was identified as *Thanatephorus cucumeris* (Frank) Donk anamorph: *Rhizoctonia solani* Kuhn with the assistance of CAB, U.K. and its pathogenicity was confirmed by fulfilling Koch's postulates.

Experiments carried out in pots showed that pencycuron (Monceren 0.025 % ai) and benomyl (benlate 0.015 % ai) were effective in controlling the pathogen.

A survey conducted to find the factors contributing to this sudden outbreak revealed that (a) a sand soil mixture with organic matter had been used in preparing seed germination beds and (b) germinated seeds had been kept in the beds for several months against RRI recommendation, in localities where the disease was detected.