Flooding to control rice hispid beetle

**Recognize the problem**

Rice hispid beetles (Simomo in Lozi) are small, shiny, blue-black and 4-5 mm long. Their body has many tiny spines. Both the adult and the larvae damage young rice plants. Adult beetles feed on the green leaves and larvae mines into the leaves. Due to the damage young rice plants wither and die. This can reduce yield up to 40% in direct planted rice, while in transplanted, it can damage the nursery up to 100%.

**Background**

Rice damage by hispid beetle is very common at seedling stage when there is no water in the field. Therefore introducing water into the field by flooding will reduce the infestation by preventing the movement of the pest and also cause suffocation or drowning. When 5-10 adult beetles or larvae are noticed during 20 steps walking through the field, then consider taking action.

The technology may not work very well in upland rice, because flooding is hard to implement.

**Management**

- Use a hand hoe to make dikes 30 to 40 centimetres high by ridging around the field.
- Make two passages for draining and flooding the field by cutting open a 20 centimetre wide portion of the dike to allow water impounded outside the field.
- Where possible a water pump can be used to pump water into the field.
- Flood the field to half the height of the rice plants until the beetle infestation is reduced.
- If you want to carry out operations such as weeding or fertiliser application drain the water using the draining passage.

**Scientific name(s)** > *Trichispa* spp.

The recommendations in this factsheet are relevant to: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Tanzania, Zambia

Authors: Bwalya Kaponda, Valentine Kilubi
Department of Agriculture
tel: +260972490818 email: k2bwalya@gmail.com

Edited by Plantwise.

Plantwise is a global initiative led by CABI
©CAB International. Published under a CC-BY-SA 4.0 licence.