Netherlands Food and Consumer
Product Safety Authority
Ministry of Economic Affairs, Agriculture and Innovation

October 2012 PEST Report - THE NETHERLANDS

National Plant Protection Organization
Catharijne Singel 59
3511 GG Utrecht
The Netherlands

First detection of *Sphacelotheca reiliana* (head smut) in several maize fields.

Introduction
This report concerns the first detection of the fungus *Sphacelotheca reiliana* in the Netherlands in October 2012 in several maize fields in the central parts of the Netherlands. The organism is not listed as a harmful organism in the EU directive 2000/29/EC and is not listed on the EPPO A1 or A2 list, nor on the alert list. The source of the infestation is not known, but natural spread from neighbouring countries is suspected. Phytosanitary measures have not been taken because the pest has a wider distribution in Europe.
Reason for reporting First report - new pest.
Identity of the pest (scientific name) *Sphacelotheca reiliana*
Categorization of the pest – none.
Location**:** municipality Oss, near the river Maas.

Pest status
Present, localised – not actionable.

Pest significance
Date of finding: October 2012
Detection and identification
- how the pest was found:
Incidental pest finding by a research institute (Wageningen University).
- how the pest was detected and identified:
Infected cobs were detected. Confirmation of the identity by spore recognition (microscope) by the National Reference Centre of the NPPO.
Impact
Severity / extent of damage:
Several fields with different maize varieties were affected, in particular the outer rows of fields (50% of plants), suggesting a contamination by external sources (wind or water).
Approximately 5% of plants is affected in the inner rowes of fields. According to one grower infections have also been observed in 2011.
In other countries where the pest occurs, losses from *S. reiliana* in maize and sorghum are generally minor, but individual fields may lose 30-50% of yield (CABI, 2012).
Origin of the pest
- possible origin of the pest: not known.
Both natural spread or infected seeds are possible pathways. Regular fungicide-coated seeds have been used for the maize crops. This includes Thiram which is effective against seed-borne infections but not against soil-borne infections of the pest (CABI, 2012).

Phytosanitary measures
Phytosanitary measures have not been taken because the pest has a wider distribution in Europe. Wageningen University has initiated further investigations for determining the distribution of this pest in the Netherlands.

References:
NPPO The Netherlands
CABI, Crop Protection Compendium 2012 (accessed 20121010).