

Abstract. A survey of 277 farmers in three major potato-growing areas in Kenya was conducted in 2000 and 2001 with the aims of assessing farmers' current perception and knowledge of late blight and practices for its management and identifying points of potential intervention in the development of integrated disease management (IDM) programmes. The problem of late blight was one of several constraints that growers faced such as lack of quality seed, markets, storage and prevalence of bacterial wilt. Most farmers (54%) regarded late blight as a serious biotic constraint upon production. Many farmers (79%) were able to recognize foliar symptoms of late blight but there was an evident lack of knowledge of tuber and stem infection, causes of leaf, stem and tuber infection, different inoculum sources, and accurate diagnosis of the disease. Most (81%) farmers associated the disease with cold weather. Farmers overwhelmingly (98%) relied on application of fungicides, mostly mancozeb (Dithane M45) and metalaxyl (Ridomil) as the main control methods, with most farmers knowing of no other method. High cost of fungicide, poor application techniques, and preference of susceptible cultivars were among the reasons contributing to inadequate control of late blight. Very few farmers showed any elements of IDM strategies, probably due to their limited knowledge of the biology of late blight. These results suggest that improvement of late blight control could be achieved by enhancing farmers' knowledge and developing and deploying IDM practices involving a multidisciplinary approach, which encompasses addressing other production constraints