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Dodder Survey January 2019

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Dodder Survey January 2019

At the 2019 UMass Cranberry Station Research and Extension Update meeting, we handed out survey with question about dodder as one of the final activities of a grant sponsored by EPA Regional Agricultural Grants Program (PE-0-96156701). The goal of this project was to assess the needs and promote IPM for dodder management in cranberry. We handed out 180 surveys and 93 were given back to us (52% return rate). The objectives of the survey were to gauge the perception of how problematic dodder is for the industry, how infestations have changed over time, and assess growers' self-defined knowledge about dodder.

Growers' perception of dodder on their farms. Growers were given a list of descriptions from which they could choose to describe their perceptions of dodder and they could select more than one description. From the 93 respondents, 141 descriptions were given. Sixteen (16) percent of the descriptions classified dodder as a persistent problem for them and one that required major efforts to control. One-fifth of the descriptions classified dodder infestations as variable; 18% classified dodder as sporadic. Thirteen (13) percent of the descriptions classified dodder as not a problem or requiring minor effort to control. Just over 6% described dodder as "horrible" or "uncontrollable".

Descriptions of dodder (intensity and color). Growers were given a list of descriptions from which they could choose to describe dodder in terms of intensity and stem color; they were encouraged to select more than one description. From the 92 respondents, 138 descriptions were given. Over half of the descriptions (54%) classified dodder as occurring in light patches; 26% described dodder as occurring in heavy patches, and 17% described dodder as not a problem. Dodder was described as thin yellow stems 27% of the time, stout orange stems 5% of the time, and as occurring as both stem types 11% of the time.

Status of dodder infestations. When asked about the status of dodder on their farms, 104 responses were given. More than 1/3 (35%) said dodder infestations had not changed over the past 5 years and 22% said things had gotten better during the same timeframe. A similar percentage (21%) said the infestations remained variable and 20% responded that dodder was not a problem. Twelve (12) percent said it had gotten worse in the past 5 years. When asked "yes/no" if dodder had changed over time, 77% said no (N=83).

Types of dodder. When asked about if they had seen or knew if different types of dodder were on their farms, 33% said they did not know. Thirty-two (32) percent said they had only one kind of dodder, 24% reported two kinds of dodder, and 5% reported "two or three" and "more than 3" types of dodder.

Self-assessed knowledge of biology and management. Over half (54%) of growers said they had good working knowledge of dodder management and 15% and 4% said their knowledge was very good or excellent, respectively. However, one-quarter felt their management knowledge was minimal. Self-assessment about dodder biology was similar, but a bit lower than knowledge about management, with only 10% and 3% stating very good or excellent knowledge of biology, respectively. Fewer reported good biology knowledge (46%) and more reported marginal biology knowledge (35%) than management knowledge. Six (6) percent reported poor knowledge about biology while zero reported poor management knowledge.

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