

Spain, new approach to fight citrus pests

The California red scale and the citrus mealy bug cause enormous problems for citrus crops in countries around the Mediterranean. A new approach developed by Koppert Spain offers bright prospects and can compete on price with toxic sprays.

The system is based on two beneficials. These are the parasitic wasps *Aphytis melinus*, (brand name Aphytis) to control the California red scale, and *Anagyrus pseudococci* (brand name Citripar) to control citrus mealy bugs. “We started the research into Aphytis in 2008,” says Business Unit Manager Europe Kris De Smet. “It proved to be a good beneficial for the red scale. We’ve investigated its use over the past two years. Now we know the right quantities and the right time to release it.”

Improvement to Citripar

The second product, Citripar, used against citrus mealybugs, was already known as a reliable means of controlling mealy bugs, but has recently been improved by Koppert. The mummies now emerge gradually, so the population continues to strengthen. A practical release system using adhesive also prevents ants from devouring the mummies of the parasitic wasp. Citrus crops are grown extensively around the Mediterranean. In Spain alone they cover an area of 300,000 hectares. That makes Spain the leader but Portugal, Italy, Greece, Turkey, and Morocco also have large areas of oranges, lemons, mandarins, and grapefruit.

Attractive pricing

Kris De Smet has high expectations for the new system. Koppert Spain plans to market the system widely. “We’re very positive. Partly because of the results customers are achieving with it, and partly because we can see that our system can compete on price with the conventional chemical approach.” To make the system even more attractive, a bigger discount is being offered to growers with larger areas.

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