

Position Paper
DEFINITION OF THE TERMS DESCRIBING THE REACTION OF
PLANTS TO PESTS OR PATHOGENS FOR THE VEGETABLE SEED INDUSTRY

(Adopted by ISF Vegetable and Ornamental Section, May 2004)

1. Preamble

Differing degrees of specificity exist in the relations between plants and pests or pathogens. Identification of such specificity generally requires the use of highly elaborate analytical methods. Recognizing whether a plant is subject to a pest or pathogen or not may depend on the analytical method employed. It is important, in general, to stress that the specificity of pests or pathogens may vary over time and space, depends on environmental factors, and that new pest biotypes or new pathogen races capable of overcoming resistance may emerge.

2. Definitions

Immunity: Not subject to attack or infection by a specified pest or pathogen.

Resistance is the ability of a plant variety to restrict the growth and development of a specified pest or pathogen and/or the damage they cause when compared to susceptible plant varieties under similar environmental conditions and pest or pathogen pressure. Resistant varieties may exhibit some disease symptoms or damage under heavy pest or pathogen pressure.

Two levels of resistance are defined.

High/standard resistance (HR*): plant varieties that highly restrict the growth and development of the specified pest or pathogen under normal pest or pathogen pressure when compared to susceptible varieties. These plant varieties may, however, exhibit some symptoms or damage under heavy pest or pathogen pressure.

Moderate/intermediate resistance (IR*): plant varieties that restrict the growth and development of the specified pest or pathogen, but may exhibit a greater range of symptoms or damage compared to resistant varieties. Moderately/intermediately resistant plant varieties will still show less severe symptoms or damage than susceptible plant varieties when grown under similar environmental conditions and/or pest or pathogen pressure.

Susceptibility is the inability of a plant variety to restrict the growth and development of a specified pest or pathogen.

The Vegetable Section of ISF recommends, as it pertains to biotic stress, that its members use the terms immunity, high/standard or moderate/intermediate resistance and susceptibility and to avoid the term tolerance in communications with their customers.

Tolerance is the ability of a plant variety to endure abiotic stress without serious consequences for growth, appearance and yield. Vegetable companies will continue to use tolerance for abiotic stress.

This document will be reviewed after a five-year period of implementation.

* The standard abbreviations HR (high/standard resistance) and IR (moderate/intermediate resistance) shall be used in all languages.