SOIL PESTS PROBLEM IN SWEETPOTATO (*IPOMOEA BATATAS* (L.) LAM.) PRODUCTION IN SOUTH HUNGARY

Adrienn Szarvas [1]*, Sundusin Afiqah Izzati Binti[2], Zhou Dai[2]

[1] Institute of Plant Sciences and Enviromental Protection, Faculty of Agriculture, University of Szeged, Hódmezővásárhely, HUNGARY
[2] Faculty of Agriculture, University of Szeged, Hódmezővásárhely, HUNGARY

*corresponding author: szarvas.adrienn@szte.hu

Samples of sweet potatoes from southern Hungary have shown feeding damage from either wireworms (*Agriotes spp.*) or white grubs *(Melolontha melolontha).* The *Melolontha melolontha* is a relatively common European insect species and the most important agricultural insect species in The Carpathian Basin. The larves causes the damages for both. White grubs bore large shallow holes into sweet potato roots that result in large feeding sites. During the monitoring season. I have observed that white grubs can be found more in sandy soils, wire worms are monitored in hard alluvial soils. Wireworms are important soil dwelling pests world-wide causing yield losses in many crops also in sweetpotato. Wireworm damage is often described as "shot-holes". Wireworms are widespread, with different species and genera present in various countries. One of the most dangerous soil pests in Hungary. Wireworm scars are usually randomly scattered over the root. It is very difficult to find in soil samples and in damaged roots, on the other hand white grubs are easily detectable. Wireworms and white grubs can cause considerable damage to storage root marketability. They can cause suchsevere damage to the crop that they are unsaleable. Soil-applied insecticides are usually effective in reducing damage, but in Hungary is not allowed to use inseticides because sweet potato is still a new crop in Hungary. Control of wireworms and white grubs before or during planting is allowed to use microbiolocial soil disinfectants. Experimental control methods, using parasitic nematodes and spores of the fungus Beauveria bassiana have been successful in controlling damage.