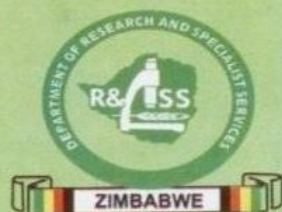


PLANT QUARANTINE SERVICES



TOBACCO LEGISLATION

A number of viruses infest tobacco resulting in the production of poor quality leaf. Insects are known to be the main vectors transmitting these viruses during their feeding from one crop to another and from one season to another. Tobacco viral diseases like Tobacco Bushy Top Virus, Tobacco Leaf Curl Virus (TLCV) and Tomato Spotted Wilt Virus (TSWV) are predominantly transmitted by insect vectors whitefly (*Bemisia tabaci*) and thrips respectively. Thrips also transmit Tobacco Streak Virus.



Tobacco streak virus



Aphids can transmit Cucumber Mosaic Virus (CMV) to which tobacco is also a primary host. The wide host range of such diseases like TLCV, CMV and TSWV ensures that there are numerous natural hosts of the virus in which the virus survives and from which it can be spread by the vectors. Depriving the insect vectors of their host (tobacco) is the most effective way of controlling the multiplication of the vectors. The **Plant Pests and Diseases (Tobacco) Regulations SI 711 of 1979** was enacted in order to restrict the incidence and spread of such insect-borne viruses through enforcing the destruction of tobacco stalks. The act stipulates that:

1. Tobacco seed may not be sown before the **1st of June** every year
2. Tobacco seedlings may not be planted out in the field before **1st September** every year.
3. Tobacco stalks in the field should be destroyed before **15th of May** every year.
4. Tobacco plants in seedbeds must be destroyed before **1 January** every year.



Warning: Failure by the farmers to observe this regulation is a punishable offence and therefore every farmer is encouraged to abide by these Regulations

The act ensures that a tobacco-free period is created between **15 May** and **1 June** every year in order to break life cycles of pests and diseases. Extension for the growing period for tobacco can be granted where circumstances beyond the growers' control have delayed completion of the cropping season. All applications for an extension of the cropping season should be submitted to the Department of Research and Specialist Services (DR&SS) at least 3 weeks prior to the stipulated destruction date.

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