UC Cooperative Extension
University of California
Agriculture & Natural Resources

Yolo, Solano & Sacramento Counties

Vegetable Info (February 2026)

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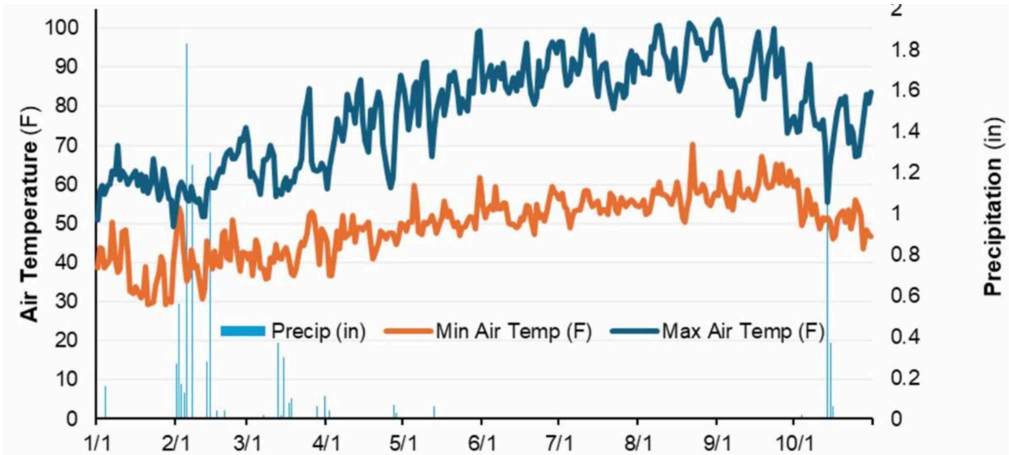
2025 season review

The 2025 season was characterized by a rainy winter, nearly perfect weather during fruit set and sizing, some late season heat and an early, rainy fall. This led to a crop of exceptional size and quality, but also harvest delays and some quality issues towards the end of the year. Heavy October rains cut the season short, and many fields were left unharvested.



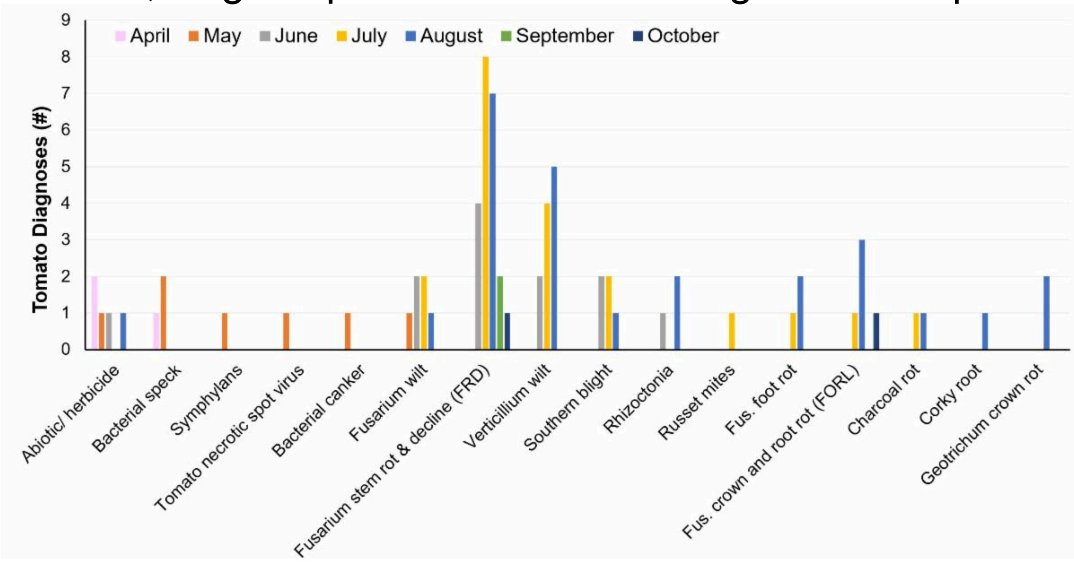
Viral diseases

Viral diseases were generally low in Sacramento Valley tomato fields in 2025. Throughout the spring season a CTRI-funded project led by UCD virologist Bob Gilbertson monitored fields in Yolo and Solano counties in historic hotspots for incidence of tomato spotted wilt virus (TSWV) and beet curly top virus (BCTV). Their vectors (thrips and beet leaf hopper, respectively) were monitored using yellow sticky cards placed on the field perimeter. Few beet leaf hoppers were detected, and BCTV was accordingly very rare. Given the wet spring, this is in line with the finding that the unusually high BCTV pressures seen in our region in 2021 and 2022 were due to changes in insect vector migration patterns during drought weather (Melgarejo et al., 2024).

Thrips populations, on the other hand, were extremely high. However, TSWV incidence was low in our region. Why? Most tomato varieties have a resistance gene for TSWV; however, two different resistance-breaking strains exist and both are common in Yolo and Solano county fields. It therefore remains a mystery why we did not see greater TSWV incidence regionally.

To help growers maximize spray efficacy, I publish a blog every 1-2 weeks within the TSWV danger window. This blog combines field observations with predictions from the UC IPM thrips phenology model to notify subscribers of optimum spray times. You can subscribe to this blog **here**.

Bacterial, fungal, and abiotic disorders



Diagnoses from 2025 farm calls and field monitoring in the Sacramento Valley, ordered by time of first appearance. Tomato spotted wilt virus and root knot nematode are not included.

In 2024, I received several calls to look at fields with early symptoms which resembled herbicide damage, but for which no clear cause could be identified. Common symptoms included leaf necrotic lesions, chlorosis and distortion, a delay in stand establishment, and in some cases transplant mortality. In 2025, we did not see similar issues. I'll continue to watch for this issue in the future.

Compared to the two previous years, in 2025 I saw more bacterial disease in spring (bacterial speck and bacterial canker). These were mostly observed on fields within a few weeks of planting. Bacterial diseases are favored by cool, humid conditions and spread with water, so the increased incidence may have been related to the relative cool, wet spring weather.

Early FRD symptoms on young leaves (var=SVTM9027). The pronounced foliar bleaching, such that the green veins clearly stand out, is a common FRD symptom. Leaf *symptoms may look very similar to those of TSWV and potassium deficiency, and it's a good idea to confirm by testing.*

Fungal diseases generally show up later in the season. As in previous years, in 2025 the most common diagnosis in Yolo, Solano, and Sacramento counties was Fusarium "falciforme" stem rot and decline (now renamed Fusarium stem rot and decline, or FRD; 30% of diagnoses). This disease is caused by two pathogens, *F. noneumartii* (thought to be the more virulent) and *F. martii*. Of the 24 FRD diagnoses made, 17 were caused by *F. noneumartii* alone, 2 by *F. martii* alone, and in five both pathogens were present. Because FRD is such a widespread problem and some varieties are known to be more resistant than others, we have been partnering with seed retailers to trial common varieties in known FRD-infested fields. Relative tolerance of the top ten varieties statewide, based on trials in FRD-infested grower fields and UCD research trials, is shown below. The varieties highlighted in green are safer choices for known FRD fields. A more complete list including all trialed varieties can be found **here**.

Performance of the top 10 processing tomato varieties (by 2025 PTAB loads) in trials conducted in FRD-infested fields since 2019. Yields for each variety in each trial were normalized to the mean yield for that trial. Yield values greater than 1 indicate that the variety generally had higher-than-average yields across trial sites.

2025 load rank	Variety	# trials	Yield	FRD susceptibility and fruit holding traits
1	HM8237	17	1.146	Tolerant, EFH, Forl resistance
2	H2016	16	0.975	Moderately susceptible to FRD, but manages to yield decently in problem fields
3	H1996	14	0.909	Very susceptible to vine decline, has EFS™ trait
4	SVTM9016	20	1.109	Tolerant to FRD; EFH
5	HM8268	11	1.024	Tolerant to FRD
6	HM58841	21	1.067	Fairly tolerant of FRD, susceptible to Fus wilt race 3. EFH.
7	SVTM9023	10	1.049	Moderate rates of vine decline
9	HM5522	15	0.997	Susceptible to FRD and Fus wilt race 3, Forl resistance
10	SVTM9037	18	1.067	Low to moderate vine decline, EFH

In this case, a "tolerant' variety is one that consistently has higher yields and lower rates of vine decline than other varieties in trials located in FRD-infested fields. There still is no true genetic resistance available for FRD, and I have observed very high rates of decline even in fields planted to these more tolerant varieties. While variety selection is the most effective FRD management approach currently available, integrating with chemical, rotational or biological approaches can be helpful.

- Fumigation with metam sodium or metam potassium (Vapam or K-Pam) is the most reliable chemical control method we have tested so far, but its efficacy is variable. **A 2025 study** on a light-textured, low-K soil found its effectiveness was increased by adding poultry manure.
- A **study in Stanislaus County** found that a greenhouse drench *Trichoderma* products showed promise in improving yields when susceptible cultivars were grown in an FRD-infested field
- Non-host crops in local rotations include garlic, onion, alfalfa, corn, cotton, melon, wheat and barley. Sunflower and pepper are both severe hosts that may develop economic losses. A complete list can be found **here**.
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The second most common diagnosis in 2025 was Verticillium wilt (caused by *Verticillium dahliae*), which accounted for 17% of all diagnoses. This is up from 5% last year. Verticillium wilt infection is favored by cooler temperatures, so the uptick in diagnoses makes sense given the mild summer. This disease is not thought to cause major decline on its own, and where it was present it nearly always co-occurred with other diseases. In 2025, the only time that it occurred by itself was in a Delta field where problems with early season water management had left the field permanently stressed.

The third most common diagnosis was Fusarium wilt (*F. oxysporum* f.sp. *lycopersic*i; 10% of diagnoses). Most varieties grown in the Sacramento Valley are resistant to Fusarium wilt race 3. While a new strain is expected to break this resistance at some point, so far to our knowledge this has not happened. Even when a resistant variety is grown, a small percentage may develop Fusarium wilt, especially if some other environmental stress is present. All of these diagnoses were either a) in a susceptible variety b) in fields where disease was present at a very low level or c) co-infections with other root rots in a stressed field. All infections in resistant varieties are tested to confirm that they are not resistance-breaking.

In 2025 I observed a phenomenon I had not seen in previous years. This was a tendency for many fields which had appeared healthy through June and July to rapidly decline in August. Decline could be almost universal in some areas of the field. Many of these fields had a good amount of marketable-quality fruit, despite most of the vines being completely dead. Diagnoses in these fields included FRD, fusarium crown and root rot (*F. oxysporum* f.sp. *radicis lycopersic*i FORL), verticillium wilt, and fusarium wilt, either alone (in the case of FRD and FORL) or in combination. Fusarium diseases are more severe in plants under other stresses, such as drought or a large fruit load. A likely explanation is that the mild summer temperatures led to an unusually heavy fruit set. Because the crop was so large region-wide, harvesting schedules were delayed. Additionally, August and early September had the first incidence all season of temperatures above 100°F. A combination of extremely heavy fruit load, heat, and water being cut off in preparation for a harvest which was then delayed may explain the rapid, nearly universal decline observed in many fields.


Top left: Severely declined field (diagnosed with FRD; var=HM8237). Top right: Declined plants with heavy fruit set (Diagnosed with FRD, var=SVTM 9016). Bottom right and left: Rapid decline in an FRD-infested field (var=SVTM 9016). Photos taken 3 weeks and 1 week before harvest.

In 2025, I also observed a much higher incidence of potassium (K) deficiency symptoms on fruit and foliage than in previous years. This is also likely related to the unusually large crop. Fruits are strong sinks for K, utilizing both K redistributed from the vines and new K taken up from the soil during fruit filling and ripening. While K availability before and during fruit set likely has the most effect on yield potential, a processing tomato crop takes up most of its K during fruit filling and ripening (Widders and Lorenz, 1982). However, fruit are also strong sinks for photosynthates at the expense of other organs like roots (Widders and Lorenz, 1979), meaning that a heavy crop may both increase the plant's need for K and reduce its ability to take it up.

Additionally, this year I noticed K deficiency symptoms often accompanied problems affecting the root systems, such as FRD or root knot nematode, even in fields where the grower had a robust K program. It is likely that the ideal early season weather allowed plants to set a heavy crop, leading to a higher late-season K demand than the damaged root systems were able to fill. This relationship between root rot, soil K, and fruit load may help explain why large applications of poultry manure compost and K fertilizer have frequently been found to be the most effective means of increasing yields in low-K fields suffering from premature vine decline (Maharaj et al., 2018).


Left: Classic K deficiency symptoms on foliage (interveinal and marginal necrosis) and fruit (yellow shoulder). Pre-plant soil test K in the top 0-12" was 150 ppm and the field had a severe FRD infestation. Right: Internal fruit ripening disorder associated with K deficiency in a field infested with resistance-breaking root knot nematode.

References

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Does chemigated rimsulfuron herbicide suppress field bindweed in processing tomatoes?

Patricia Lazicki, Scott Stoddard, Brad Hanson
UCCE Yolo-Solano-Sacramento, UCCE Merced-Madera, UC ANR Weeds Specialist

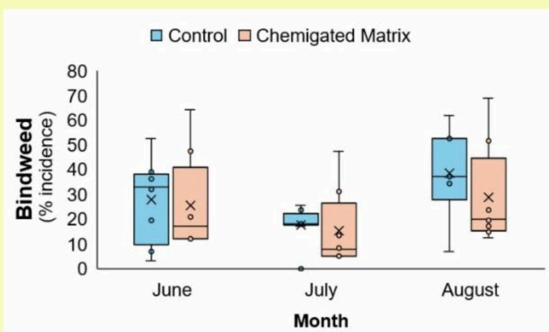
Introduction
Branched broomrape (*Phelipanche ramosa*) is a growing threat to processing tomato industry in California, and application of rimsulfuron through subsurface drip tape is currently the only registered chemical management option. Although foliar postemergence applications of rimsulfuron are widely used for broad-spectrum weed control, the resurgence of broomrape has led to a shift toward chemigation-based applications targeted specifically for broomrape suppression.

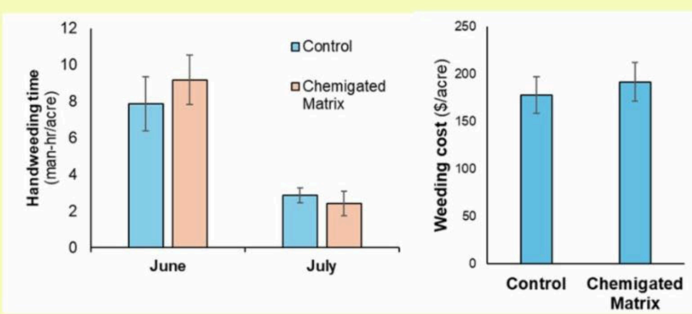
After the chemigation use pattern was approved in 2023, several growers using chemigated rimsulfuron reported suppression of field bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*). This effect had not been noted in the small-plot trials used to validate efficacy on broomrape. If rimsulfuron chemigated through the drip tape provides in-season field bindweed suppression in addition to broomrape, the practice could be a proactive, dual-purpose strategy, both preventing broomrape spread and reducing the need for hand weeding of field bindweed. Such an approach may offer economic and operational advantages without increasing input expenses.

Methods
In 2025 we conducted trials at four locations to evaluate the impact of chemigated rimsulfuron (Matrix) herbicide through the subsurface drip irrigation system on suppressing field bindweed in processing tomato fields. Fields were selected based on previous history of heavy bindweed pressure and did not have broomrape infestations. Three of these locations were in Yolo County (Yolo Commercial, Russell Ranch, and UCD Veg Crops), and one location was in Merced County. At all locations, rimsulfuron treatments were applied about 20, 30, and 40 days after planting. Plots consisted of entire irrigation blocks randomly assigned as treated or untreated. At each treatment, 1.33 oz Matrix/A was run through the drip system during the middle of an irrigation set, for a total of 4 oz/A during the season.

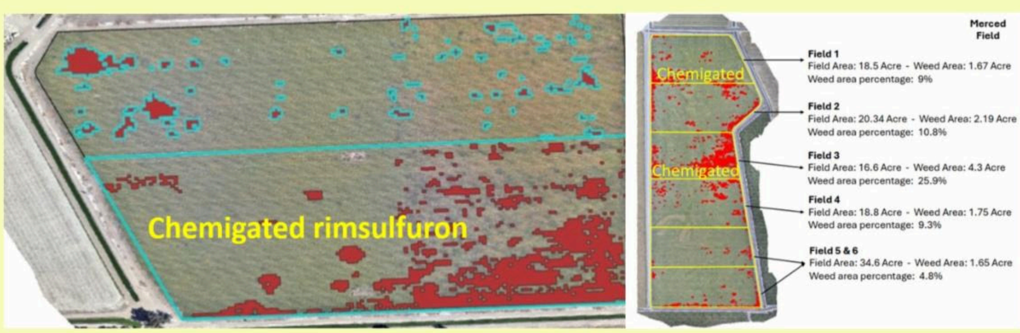
	Yolo Commercial	Russell Ranch	UCD Veg Crops	Merced Commercial
Location	Yolo County	Yolo County	Yolo County	Merced County
Plot size	Eight 9-acre blocks. 4 blocks treated, 4 blocks grower standard	37 acre field, split into two blocks. 1 block treated, 1 block grower standard	50 acre field, split into two blocks. 1 block treated, 1 block grower standard	Four 16-acre blocks. 2 blocks treated, 2 blocks grower standard

In the irrigation blocks receiving rimsulfuron through the tape, it was not applied as a normal banded POST application. Field bindweed evaluations were made by walking the fields on three different dates during the growing season and recording the presence of bindweed on 2-3 beds per treatment block at 25 to 50 ft intervals. Aerial imagery was also collected using a DJI phantom multi-rotor drone (image resolution: 2.5 cm/pixel) at Aug 14-15 to assess bindweed coverage in treated vs untreated areas to complement field assessments. Yields were assessed at the Yolo and Merced commercial sites.





Bindweed incidence and hand-weeding times and costs did not differ between treatments in the Winters field (n=4). Yields (quantified on two blocks only) also did not differ consistently between treatments.



Drone imagery from the UCD Russell Ranch and Merced sites (Aug 14th-15th). Matrix was chemigated on the lower half of the field at Russell Ranch and on the 1st and 3rd blocks at Merced. Bindweed area is shown in red. There is no evidence that chemigating Matrix reduced bindweed incidence at either site, or at the UCD Veg Crops site. Yields were not affected at the Merced site.

We did not observe field bindweed suppression from the chemigated rimsulfuron treatments at any of the three sites. The limited yield data suggest that this method of application also did not have an impact on the tomato crop. However, the lack of replication and site years makes it difficult to state with confidence if this conclusion holds true most of the time. Despite the lack of strong evidence for bindweed co-suppression, chemigating Matrix remains the most effective strategy for broomrape control in CA processing tomato.

*Questions? Please contact Patricia Lazicki (**palazicki@ucanr.edu**).*

Thanks to Ahmed Kayad (UCCE Tulelake) for providing drone imagery, and to Tony & Mike Turkovich (Button & Turkovich Ranch) and Dan Burns (San Juan Ranch) for hosting the trial and facilitating applications and yield and hand-weeding measurements. This project was funded by the California Tomato Research Institute (CTRI).

Resistance-breaking root knot nematode in California processing tomato: resistance and management

Patricia Lazicki[1], Md Shah Alam[2], Amanda Hodson[2]

[1]UCCE Yolo, Solano & Sacramento counties [2]UC Davis Dept of Plant Pathology & Nematology

History

While there are many pests and diseases of tomato, root-knot nematodes alone can cause potential yield losses of up to 100%, especially when co-occurring with other issues. Processing tomatoes in California have traditionally been managed for root-knot nematodes in the genus *Meloidogyne* using cultivars that contain a gene introduced from wild tomato relatives conferring resistance (the *Mi* gene). However, nematodes able to overcome this resistance were first observed 28 years ago and have been increasingly observed in recent years from tomatoes throughout California. Initially, it was thought that the breakdown in resistance was due to higher temperatures affecting the gene's ability to protect the plant. But recent experiments have shown that nematodes can reproduce on cultivars containing the *Mi* gene even when grown at constant temperature, suggesting that the nematodes themselves have evolved genetic resistance.

Field with resistance-breaking RKN in Solano County in 2025. Symptoms started to be evident 10 weeks before harvest, and reduced yields and quality.

Interaction with Fusarium diseases

To complicate matters even more, root-knot nematodes can form disease complexes with plant parasitic fungi. Combined infections of nematodes and fungi can increase plant mortality simply because two pathogens are worse than one. Synergistic interactions can also cause disease symptoms more devastating than expected from their additive combined effects, or their effects separately. Some studies suggest that prior infection with root-knot nematodes can worsen the symptoms of fusarium wilt of tomato (Fusarium oxysporum f. sp. lycopersici), perhaps because nematodes suppress the plant immune system and increase root exudates that promote fungal chlamydospore hatching.

In a greenhouse trial, the authors recently tested if prior infection with root-knot nematodes caused more severe symptoms and disease incidence of Fusarium wilt than tomatoes infected with the fungus alone. Two different tomato cultivars were tested, a Fusarium-susceptible F2 cultivar (H8504) and a resistant F3 cultivar (N6428). Preliminary data show that for both cultivars, combined infections of the root-knot nematode Meloidogyne javanica and Fusarium reduced aboveground tomato growth compared to treatments with either the nematodes or fungus alone. For the F3 cultivar, combined infections caused greater prevalence chlorosis disease symptoms at 45 and 60 days than either pathogen alone ($P < 0.05$). In terms of management, this suggests that nematode presence can, indeed, worsen the symptoms of Fusarium infection even in a resistant cultivar, highlighting the need for co-management of these two pests.

Nematode resistance-breaking strain affects infection severity more than tomato variety

Growers sometimes wonder if some tomato cultivars grow better under RKN pressure than others, since even some partial resistance might be better than nothing. In a laboratory experiment, we recently tested how five common tomato cultivars containing the *Mi* gene differed in their susceptibility to resistance breaking root knot nematodes. Cultivars included: HM58841, SVTM9027, SVT9016, HM8268, and HM8237. Tomatoes were grown in an incubator at room temperature and exposed to two isolates of the nematode *M. incognita* known to be resistance breaking (#157- Fresno Co and #213- Yolo Co) as well as two isolates of *M. javanica* (MJ198- Yolo Co. and MJJDC- San Joaquin Co.). The Fresno Co. *M. incognita* isolate had nearly 20 times the reproductive output compared to the Yolo isolate ($p < 0.001$). However, under either isolate, galling was similar among cultivars. For the two *M. javanica* isolates, reproduction was similar, and some differences between cultivars were seen. The San Joaquin Co. isolate caused two times more galling on Cultivar 1 (HM58841) than Cultivar 5 (HM8268; $p=0.02$). But for the *M. javanica* Yolo Co. isolate, Cultivar 5 (HM8268) had 69% more galling than Cultivar 4 (HM8237; $p=0.02$). For all *M. javanica* isolates, nematode reproduction on tested cultivars was similar to one that contained no nematode resistance ('Rutgers'). This indicates that the behavior of nematode isolates likely varies too much between fields for cultivar choice to make much of a difference and that current resistance genes are not working against nematodes in the wild.

Non-fumigant chemical control

Historically, root-knot nematodes have largely been managed using fumigants (e.g. Telone, InLine, Vapam) or other broad-spectrum materials with high general toxicity (e.g. Vydate). In recent years, several less toxic and more nematode-specific products have become available. Jaspreet Sidhu and Philip Waisen (UCCE Vegetable Crops advisors in Kern and Imperial counties, respectively) have trialed several non-fumigant nematicides in tomatoes and other vegetable crops. Of the products trialed in Kern, Salibro (Corteva), Nimitz (Adama), and Velum One (Bayer) all consistently have reduced root galling in processing tomato. Another product, Tymirium (Syngenta), has also been promising in trials. Registration is expected in 2027.

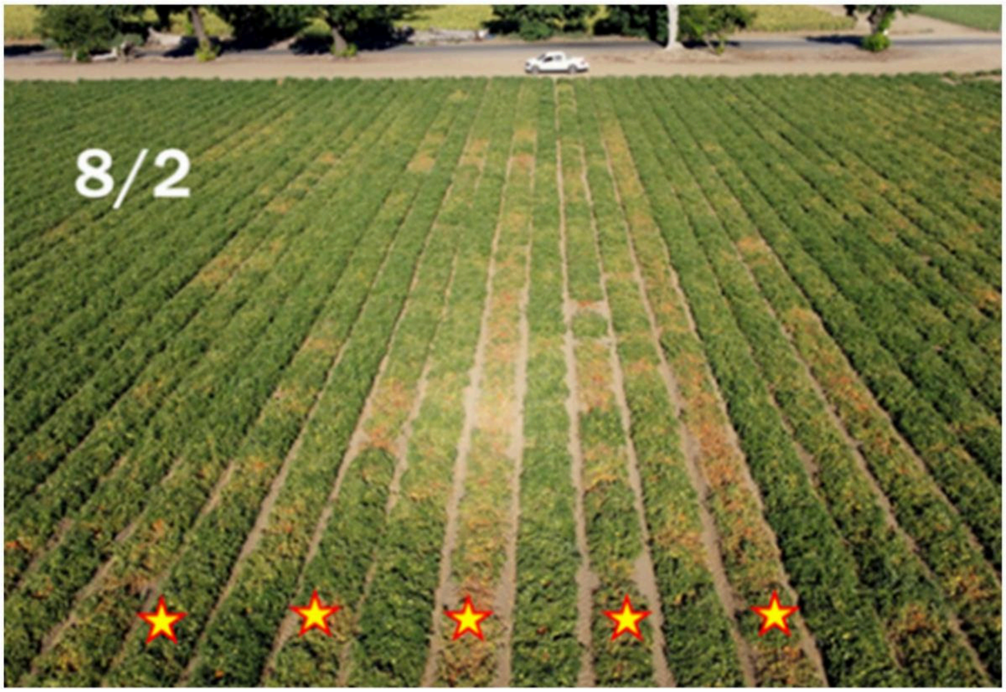
Product	A.i.	Rate	Timing	Important considerations
Velum One	Fluopyram	6.64 fl oz/acre; max 13.7 oz/yr. Max two applications per season for any use.	Min. 7 days between applications. Can be applied up to the day of harvest.	Does not move easily in soil, less effective if applied without adjuvant. May kill beneficial nematodes. Also labeled as a fungicide (Group 7), especially for powdery mildew.
Nimitz	Fluensulfone	56-112 fl oz/acre/yr. 1 application/crop	7-10 days prior to planting. Sufficient soil moisture required for adequate movement	Phytotoxic, must be applied preplant.
Salibro	Fluazaindolizine	30.1-61.4 fl oz/acre preplant or at plant. 15.3-30.7 fl oz/acre in-season chemigation. Max 61.4 oz/yr	Preplant (within 7 d of planting) or in-season. Min 14 d between applications. PHI= 1 d.	Less likely to kill beneficial nematodes. Efficacy improved by applying more than once. (2nd application critical to maintaining a lethal dose in the rhizosphere to control juveniles that hatch from surviving eggs in response to host root exudates.)

2025 was the first year in which Salibro was registered for tomatoes in California. To test efficacy, a trial was performed in a commercial field near Dixon with a history of yield loss due to a resistance-breaking RKN infestation. Processing tomato (HM8237) was planted on 4/21. Salibro (30.7 oz/acre) was applied 20 and 50 DAP to the whole field. Valves were installed on 5 alternating drip lines in a part of the field with high historic pressure and shut off during Salibro applications, to form five replicated treated/nontreated paired plots. Damage was assessed in 200-ft long observation plots located near the center of the trial rows. Symptomatic plants were counted and NDVI readings taken using a handheld meter about 9 weeks before harvest when symptoms first became widespread, and again just before harvest. At harvest, yields were mechanically harvested from the 200-ft observation plots into a weigh wagon. A subsample of fruit was taken off the harvester and sorted to determine cull percentages.

Salibro-treated rows had fewer signs of early nematode damage (wilted plants counted 9 weeks before harvest) than untreated rows, although galling was observed in both treatments. Despite high variability in the trial, Salibro application significantly increased yields by 11 t/a. This was accompanied by a marginally significant decrease in the proportion sunburned and moldy fruit but not of declined plants, suggesting yield increases were due to delayed symptom onset.

Crop health, tomato yields and quality from 2025 commercial field trial (n=5)

	Control	Salibro	p-value
NDVI (early)	83	84	
NDVI (late)	59	64	
Early wilt (%)	3.7	0.3	p=0.08
Yield (t/a)	68	80	p=0.03
Color	21	21	
Brix	4.8	4.9	
Fruit pH	4.4	4.4	
Pinks (%)	0.4	0.2	
Greens (%)	1.3	0.9	
Sunburn (%)	8.3	4.3	p=0.09
Mold (%)	1.5	0.6	p=0.09
Total culls (%)	11.5	6.0	p=0.08
Dead plants @ harvest (%)	49	34	



Trial 7 weeks before harvest. Starred rows are untreated. Photo courtesy of Fred Rehrman.

Management considerations

Nematode isolates that can break genetic resistance in processing tomatoes are very common, with some strains much more virulent than others. Practice good equipment sanitation to avoid spreading these resistant strains to new fields. Lab tests suggest that cultivar choice may not make much difference. It's good to be aware that nematodes do not just cause problems in isolation. Root-knot nematodes can worsen the symptoms of Fusarium infection. If both pathogens are known to be an issue at a site, chose control methods that will target both pests simultaneously (products with nematicidal and fungicidal action). Unless pressure is very high or there are multiple pests to be managed, non-fumigant nematicides are preferred due to their lower toxicity.

Thank you to TS&L (Scott Picanso) for donating plants for the cultivar trial, and to Robben Ranch (Spencer Bei and Aaron Black) for hosting the Salibro trial.

Questions? Please contact Patricia Lazicki (UCCE Vegetable Crops Advisor for Yolo, Solano & Sacramento counties)

Reminder: Don't spread broomrape seed on spring equipment!

As spring tillage begins, keep in mind that any equipment which collects soil and transfers it from field to field has the potential to spread broomrape seed. The larger the amount of soil, the greater the risk. Seeds can remain dormant for decades and still germinate in the presence of a host. Cleaning equipment coming out of known broomrape fields can reduce the risk of spread, even if those fields have not been in tomato recently.

Quaternary ammonium compounds (QACs) such as MG-4 Quat are effective at killing broomrape seed, but they are deactivated by soil. Tests by Brad Hanson's lab suggest that even when high concentrations of QAC are used, by the time the material has penetrated a thick layer of soil it is no longer effective. Physical cleaning will be more effective than spraying QACs on a very dirty surface. The latest information on the UC Davis team's equipment sanitation research can be found **here**.

Updated list: varietal tolerance to FRD

Results from more than six years of replicated variety trials in FRD-infested fields have been compiled to create a list of relative tolerance for common varieties.

[List of varieties (updated Feb 2026)]

Questions? Contact Brenna Aegerter (bjaegerter@ucanr.edu) or Patricia Lazicki (palazicki@ucanr.edu

Presentations from the 2026 S. Sacramento Valley Processing Tomato Meeting are online

2026 Annual Meeting Agenda & Sponsor Thank You!

- Causal factors of the yield gap between 'old' and 'new' fields in processing tomato; nematicide trial results (Patricia Lazicki)

- **Understanding herbicide efficacy, movement & crop response** (Mandeep Singh)
- **Fusarium stem rot & decline (FRD) management 1: Intro & variety selection** (Brenna Aegerter)
- **FRD management 2: Genetics** (Myles Collinson)
- **FRD management 3: Trichoderma** (Zheng Wang)
- **FRD management 4: Combined fumigant and biological/nutritional approaches** (Patricia Lazicki)
- **Laws and regulations update from the Yolo County Ag Commissioner's Office** (Molly Matthews)
- **2025 AgSeeds variety overview** (Ross Lopez)
- **Broomrape management research update** (Brad Hanson)
- **2025 processing tomato disease overview & equipment sanitation update** (Cassandra Swett)
- **Evaluating impact of superabsorbent polymer on processing tomato yield & quality under different water levels** (Isaya Kisekka)
- **Stink bug damage in processing tomatoes, biology, risk factors & management options** (Tom Turini)

New office location

The UCCE office in Woodland has a new location. We are now at
2780 East Gibson Road
Woodland, CA 95776
Office hours are from Monday - Friday, 9 am - 12 pm, 1:30 pm - 4 pm