

**The biology of *Bemisia tabaci* (Genn.)
in the Souss Massa region of Morocco**

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The tomato yellow leaf curl virus (TYLCV) was detected for the first time in the Agadir area in 1998. Since then, it has produced heavy losses in the tomato crops of this region, which has great importance in the horticultural production from Morocco. A series of studies were conducted in 2000 and 2001 in order to characterize the biology of the whitefly *Bemisia tabaci*, vector of the TYLCV. Two sites were chosen: a group of plastic houses in the region of Souss Massa and the Experimental Station of the ORMVASM in Ait Amira. The development of the aleyrodids on different hosts was followed in parallel with the incidence of TYLCV in the crops.

The proportion of *B. tabaci* in relation to that of *T. vaporariorum* is variable in different areas. It varies from 47.5% at Biougra to 68% at Massa and 84% at Ouled Taïma. The TYLCV infection level is highly variable. It varies from 35 to 77 % in open air and from 4 to 49 % in plastic house. *Bemisia tabaci* evolves in 3 to 4 generations, based on the evolution of pupa.

The biotype of *Bemisia tabaci* in this region was determined in a total of 44 samples by RAPD-PCR. All the samples analyzed belonged to biotype Q, genetically similar to the biotype found in other countries from the Mediterranean Basin.