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SCIENCE AND SOCIETY INSIGHTS
Sci Soc Insights (2025), 1(2): 51-59 Research Article

Influence of Farmers' Management Practices on the Prevalence and Spread of Potato Bacterial Wilt (Ralstonia solanacearum) in District Okara, Punjab, Pakistan

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Article History: 25-290 Received: 08 Nov 2024 Revised: 08 Feb 2025 Accepted: 08 Feb 2025 Published Online: 2025

Citation: Nadeem B, 2025. Influence of farmers' management practices on the prevalence and spread of potato bacterial wilt (Ralstonia solanacearum) in District Okara, Punjab, Pakistan. Sci Soc Insights. 1(2), 51-59

ABSTRACT

Potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) is a vital food and cash crop in Pakistan, with Punjab accounts for over 75% of national production. District Okara is a major potato-growing region; however, bacterial wilt caused by *Ralstonia solanacearum* poses a serious threat, leading to yield losses of 30–80%. This study examined the influence of farmers' management practices on the prevalence and spread of bacterial wilt. Further, it measured the spatial distribution of potato bacterial wilt in the study area. A total of 225 farmers were surveyed using a structured questionnaire. Results revealed that 39.6% of farmers did not use certified seeds and relied on seed saed from previous crop and49.8% used flood irrigation, the practices favours the spread of *Ralstonia solanacearum*. . The overall disease prevalence was 60%, with the highest recorded in Village G (78.38%). Statistical analyses showed significant associations between disease incidence and farm practices, including seed source ($p = 0.001$), crop rotation ($p = 0.000$), irrigation method ($p = 0.002$), and field sanitation ($p = 0.000$). Access to extension services ($\chi^2 = 25.12$; $p = 0.000$) strongly influenced the adoption of recommended practices. These findings underscore the urgent need for integrated disease management strategies, farmer education, and improved access to certified seed to reduce disease spread and enhance sustainable potato production.

***Keywords*:** Potato production, *Ralstonia solanacearum*, Bacterial wilt, Disease prevalence, Management practices, Certified seed, Punjab Pakistan, Integrated disease management

INTRODUCTION

Potato (*Solanum tuberosum* L.) is a critical staple food and vital cash crops globally, serving as a significant source of food, nutrition, and income for millions of farmers and consumers. Pakistan ranks among the major potato-producing countries in South Asia, with Punjab accounting for over 75% of the national production due to its favorable agro-climatic conditions and fertile soils (Pakistan Bureau of Statistics, 2024). District Okara, located in central Punjab, is particularly renowned for commercial potato cultivation, playing a vital role in both domestic supply and exports. However, potato production in the region faces several biotic constraints, of which bacterial wilt caused by *Ralstonia solanacearum* is among the most devastating (Ali et al., 2023; Adnani et al., 2024). As per a large body of literature (Anoumaa et al. 2022; Akiko et al. 2019), a single type of soil-borne pathogen has the potential to cause mass impoverishment and economic hardships, especially within communities that rely heavily on potatoes, resulting in a decline in tuber quality.

The rapid transmission of bacterial wilt, through the use of contaminated farm iron, planting materials, soil, and irrigation water has proven to be a daunting challenge for disease control (Assefa, 2020). In Punjab, the disease caused a major deficit in crop yield ranging from thirty to eighty percent, as a result of faulty cultivation practices (Atieno et al. 2023). Ability of Pseudomonas solanacearum to stay firm in soil and thrive in diverse environmental conditions makes it more challenging. The impact of farmer practices on the tuber, crop rotation, irrigation, disease control, and the use of resistant cultivars can influence the proliferation and control of bacterial wilt (Belay et al. 2022). Sadly, a significant number of resource-poor farmers located in Okara predominantly depend on traditional practices, causing proliferation of bacterial wilt (Bereika et al. 2020)

Worldwide, research has indicated that implementing appropriate disease management practices, such as the use of disease-free seeds, appropriate crop rotations, equipment disinfection, and prompt regional rostering, can help

mitigate bacterial wilt (Buja et al. 2021, Devaux et al. 2021). Unfortunately, in many developing countries, failing to appreciate the problem, the disproportionate access to expansion services, and the socio-economic-environment milieu greatly hinder efficient disease management practice (Devaux et al. 2021). In Pakistan, research on relations between farmer practices and bacterial wilt circulation is limited, especially in major potato productive areas such as Okara. Understanding these linkages is crucial for designing effective extension programs and policy interventions to curb the spread of the disease.

The purpose of this study is to assess the impact of farmers' management practices on the spread of potato bacterial wilt in the district of Okara, Punjab, Pakistan. In particular, the study is based on following objectives: (1) Identification of current potato production and management practices after farmers, (2) Assess the spread and spatial distribution of bacterial wilt and (3) Analyze relation between specific agricultural practices and potato bacterial wilt.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research design

Data was collected in the 2024–2025 potato cropping season using a cross-sectional quantitative research design. The study integrated spatial mapping, farmer survey data, field disease assessments, and laboratory confirmation to understand the dynamics of the disease.

Study population

Okara is one of Punjab's Districts most rich in potato cultivation, owing to its fertile soil and favorable climatic conditions, which make it ideal for farming. The District is composed of five major tehsils, which include Okara, Dapalpur, Renla Khurd. These tehsils also report the infamous bacterial wilt outbreak season. As of the year 2024, the total reported farmers in the district is of approximately of 4,500. This target population included small, medium and large scale potato farmers. One tehsil was selected randomly, from which 15 villages were chosen randomly. 15 farmers were also randomly selected from each village to reach a total sample size of 225 farmers.

Data collection

Data collection was carried out in three integrated phases. In Phase 1, a structured questionnaire was used to gather information on farmers' production and management practices. The survey included sections on farmer demographics (age, education, farming experience, landholding size, and income sources), seed selection (certified, farm-saved, or uncertified seed), irrigation practices (flood, furrow, or drip irrigation), crop rotation strategies, field sanitation, use of resistant potato varieties, and access to extension services. The questionnaire was pre-tested on 20 farmers outside the study area to ensure clarity and validity. Data were collected through face-to-face interviews conducted in the local language (Punjabi) by trained enumerators.

In Phase 2, field surveys were conducted to assess bacterial wilt prevalence and its spatial distribution. For each farm, three representative plots measuring 10 m × 10 m were selected for plant observation. Disease incidence was recorded based on visual symptoms such as wilting, yellowing, and vascular discoloration, following the diagnostic guidelines of Elphinstone (2005). The Prevalence percentage was calculated using the following formula:

$$\text{Prevalence \%} = \frac{\textit{Number of infected fields}}{\textit{Total number of fields observed}} \times 100$$

And disease severity index was calculated by:

$$\text{DSI} = \frac{\sum (n \times v)}{N \times V}$$

Where:

- n = Number of plants in each severity category
- v = Numerical value of each severity category (0–5 scale)
- N = Total number of plants observed
- V = Maximum numerical value of the severity scale

Data analysis

Data analysis was performed using SPSS v26. Descriptive statistics such as means, frequencies, and percentages were used to summarize farmer demographics, management practices, and disease prevalence. Inferential statistical tests were conducted to explore relationships between variables. A Chi-square (χ^2) test was applied to determine associations between categorical variables, such as education level and adoption of management practices. The general formula for the Chi-square test is:

$$X^2 = \sum \frac{(O-E)^2}{E}$$

Where:

O = observed frequency

E = expected frequency

An independent t-test/ANOVA was used to assess the relationship between different farm management practices and the prevalence of potato bacterial wilt **(***Ralstonia solanacearum***).**

Reliability and validity

To ensure reliability and validity, Cronbach's alpha was calculated for different sections of the questionnaire, with all values exceeding the 0.70 threshold, indicating good internal consistency. Triangulation was achieved by combining farmer self-reports, direct field observations, and laboratory confirmation of the pathogen.

Ethical considerations

Ethical views were addressed by obtaining formal approval from the Institutional Review Board of the Agricultural University. Farmers were informed of the study's purpose, and verbal consent was obtained before the interview. Participants were assured that their data would remain confidential and would be strictly used for educational and policy-making purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Demographic characteristics

Table 1: Demographic Characteristics of Respondents (n = 225)

Variable	Category	Frequency (f)	Percentage (%)
Age (years)	20 – 30	35	15.6
	31 – 40	64	28.4
	41 – 50	72	32.0
	Above 50	54	24.0
Education Level	No formal education	48	21.3
	Primary (1–5 years)	52	23.1
	Secondary (6–10 years)	64	28.4
	Higher secondary and above	61	27.1
Farm Size (acres)	< 5 acres (Small)	78	34.7
	5 – 10 acres (Medium)	94	41.8
	> 10 acres (Large)	53	23.5
Farming Experience	< 10 years	46	20.4
	10 – 20 years	83	36.9
	> 20 years	96	42.7
Household Size	1 – 5 members	67	29.8
	6 – 10 members	118	52.4
	> 10 members	40	17.8
Access to Extension Services	Yes	137	60.9
	No	88	39.1

The demographics of potato farmers in Okara District, Punjab province, Pakistan, are described in Table 1. The results show that the largest age cohorts are middle-aged, with 32% in the 41-50 year age group, and 28.4% in the 31-40 year age group. This indicates that potato farming is mostly undertaken by middle-aged farmers. Similar conclusions have been reached by Ali et al. (2023), and Hussain et al. (2022), stressing that middle-aged farmers are more productive in potato farming as well as in potato disease management. Concerning education, 28.4% and 27.1% of the respondents reported completion of secondary school and attaining higher secondary school level, respectively, while 21.3% reported not having any formal schooling. This scenario indicates that a significant level of the farmers have low orbasic educational qualifications. As noted by Parveen et al. (2022), and FAO (2022), farmer's educational level is critical in understanding and practicing new farming techniques, particularly in the integrated management of bacterial wilt in potato.

The survey data revealed that about 41.8% of the respondents operated on medium-sized farms (5–10 acres), while 34.7% managed small farms (<5 acres), and 23.5% owned large farms (>10 acres). This illustrates a mixed farming system in which both smallholder and semi-commercial farmers coexist. Farm size showed a similar pattern in Punjab (FAOSTAT et al. 2022; Wang et al. 2023), indicating that farm size determines resource allocation and the adoption of higher production technologies.

Experience in farming was also significant, with 42.7% of farmers having over 20 years of experience and 36.9% having from 10 to 20 years. These farmers are more likely to understand disease symptoms and control practices in comparison to the rest of the population. This finding are consistent with the studies by Yao et al. (2023) and Kapalasa et al. (2022) who argued that experience is crucial when it comes to the use of technology and decisions made on the farm. Household size analysis revealed that 52.4% of households had of 6 to 10 members, indicating a moderately large family size. Evidence suggests that the more family members there are, the more likely they are to contribute to farm work. This reduces the need for hired labor but increases the demand for change in income distribution on the farm (Hussain et al. 2022). 60.9% of farmers had access to extension services while 39.1% did not have access at all.

This is an indicator of a moderately low institutional support which also suggests a strong underperformance of extension deprtment in disseminating agricultural information. Extension services are fundamental in promoting the knowledge and practice of integrated management of diseases, particularly in controlling bacterial wilt, as emphasized by Karacic et al. in 2024 and Karlsson et al. in 2020.

Potato Production and Management Practices

Table 2: Current Potato Production and Management Practices Followed by Farmers (n = 225)

Practice Area	Category/Option	Frequency	Percentage
Seed Source	Saved from previous harvest	89	39.6
	Purchased from local market	73	32.4
	Certified seed from government agencies	41	18.2
	Certified seed from private companies	22	9.8
Crop Rotation Practice	Regular rotation (2–3 years)	97	43.1
	Occasional rotation	65	28.9
	No rotation (continuous potato)	63	28.0
Irrigation Method	Flood irrigation	112	49.8
	Furrow irrigation	76	33.8
	Drip/Sprinkler irrigation	37	16.4
Fertilizer Application	Balanced use (NPK based on recommendation)	84	37.3
	Excessive nitrogen use	87	38.7
	Random/unplanned application	54	24.0
Field Sanitation	Regular cleaning of tools and equipment	62	27.6
	Occasional cleaning	77	34.2
	No cleaning	86	38.2
Use of Resistant Varieties	Yes	68	30.2
	No	157	69.8

The findings indicate that a significant proportion of farmers rely on saved seed from previous harvests (39.6%), while 32.4% purchase seeds from local markets**,** which may be of uncertain quality. Only 18.2% source certified seeds from government agencies**,** and a mere 9.8% source them from certified private companies. This reflects a low adoption rate of quality seed, which aligns with previous studies reporting that limited access to certified seeds and high costs often discourage farmers from using improved planting materials (Kinyua et al., 2022; Kithome et al., 2022). The predominance of uncertified seed sources contributes to the spread of diseases such as bacterial wilt by allowing pathogens to carry over from infected tubers (Gobena, 2020). Regarding crop rotation practices**,** 43.1% of farmers follow regular rotation (2–3 years), which is beneficial for soil health and disease control. However, 28.9% practice occasional rotation**,** and 28.0% report no rotation at all**,** continuously cultivating potatoes in the same fields. Continuous monocropping has been widely recognized as a key factor that exacerbates the prevalence of soil-borne diseases like bacterial wilt (Korir et al., 2020). These findings highlight the need to promote crop rotation as a sustainable disease management strategy. In terms of irrigation practices**,** flood irrigation remains the most common method (49.8%), followed by furrow irrigation (33.8%), while only 16.4% of farmers have adopted drip or sprinkler systems**.** The reliance on flood irrigation not only leads to inefficient water use but also increases the risk of bacterial wilt spread through contaminated water channels (Hayes et al., 2022). Modern irrigation methods like drip irrigation have been shown to reduce pathogen spread and enhance water-use efficiency, suggesting a critical area for intervention and farmer training (Izuogu et al., 2024).

Regarding fertilizer application, such as practicing what is referred to as "balanced fertilizer application based on recommendations," 37.3% applied fertilizers in random or imbalanced ways, 24.0% applied unbalanced fertilizers, while 38.7% claimed unjustified application of excessive nitrogen. Njenga et al. (2021) even claim excessive vegetative growth, sutured with nitrogen overuse, puts potato plants at higher risks of contracting bacterial wilt and other infections. Soil balancing and nutrient management can stem from mere soil testing and can improve yield while reducing the incidence of disease.

Izuogu et al. (2024) further verified that bacterial wilt and other bacterial pathogens can be transmitted between fields due to inadequate sanitation. In the 2024 study, only 27.6% of farmers cleaned and sanitized their tools and equipment, while 34.2% did so only occasionally, and 38.2% claimed to never scrub the equipment. These results suggest there is little understanding of how integrated disease management can provide levers to negative citizen behavior. The only other explanation is poor awareness among farmers. This is in line with Gobena (2020), who pointed out there is little support to farmers from informational service providers to guide them on managing disease.

The access to and promotion of resistant varieties could be instrumental in reducing bacterial wilt prevalence. Evidence indicates that poorly designed management practices contribute to the enhanced spread and persistence of bacterial wilt. The results highlight the need for integrated disease management, which includes the promotion of certified seeds, strategic crop rotation, rational fertilization, careful weeding, and the planting of resistant varieties to lessen the disease impact and more sustainable potato farming in the area.

Prevalence and Spatial Distribution of Bacterial Wilt

Insights into the prevalence and spatial distribution of potato bacterial wilt (Ralstonia solancearum) in the seven surveyed villages of District Okara, Punjab, Pakistan, is illustrated in Table 3. The results show the bacterial wilt disease is endemic and remains a potential and alarming threat to potato production in the region, registering a startling 60% disease prevalence rate with the population averaging a Disease Severity Index (DSI) of 0.47.

Table 3: Prevalence and Spatial Distribution of Bacterial Wilt in Surveyed Villages (n = 225 fields)

Village/Area	Total Fields Surveyed (n)	Number of Infected Fields (n)	Prevalence (%)	Disease Severity Index (DSI)
Village A	30	18	60.00	0.45
Village B	28	13	46.43	0.38
Village C	32	15	46.88	0.40
Village D	25	17	68.00	0.52
Village E	35	20	57.14	0.47
Village F	38	23	60.53	0.49
Village G	37	29	78.38	0.58
Overall Total	225	135	60.00	0.47

The highest prevalence was observed in Village G at 78.38%, alongside the region's highest DSI (0.58), suggesting infection levels that could substantially reduce crop yield. In contrast, the lowest prevalence (46.43%) and DSI (0.38) were observed in Village B (South Okara), indicating comparatively superior practices pertaining to disease control and management. Moderate prevalence levels were recorded in Village A (60.00%), Village F (60.53%), and Village E (57.14%). The difference in the prevalence of bacterial wilt was due to differences in farming practices, environmental factors, and available farming extension services. Increased disease prevalence was observed in villages that had no access to certified seeds, practiced poor crop rotation, and predominantly used flood irrigation. For example, Village G had a high dependence on saved seed and continuous potato cultivation, which are recognized as the major risk factors for disease persistence and spread (Njiru et al., 2021; NPCK, 2021). In addition to this, flood irrigation has the potential to enhance the spread of Ralstonia solanacearum sluggishly moves in saturated soils, to directly translocate between diseased fields (Izuogu et al., 2024).

The existence of disease hotspots in peripheral regions demonstrates the impact of socio-economic conditions and infrastructure on the control of diseases. Farmers in these regions do not have access to timely training and extension services, which results in poor adoption of some of the most basic recommended practices, such as field sanitation, irrigation, use of resistant varieties, and proper irrigation (Ali et al., 2022). This corresponds to the findings of earlier studies on potato bacterial wilt in South Asia and Africa, where bacterial wilt has been reported as a major constraint to sustainable production (Khairy et al., 2021; Liu et al., 2022). This underscores the importance of providing education on seed systems, integrated disease management, and targeted interventions to constituents affected by potato bacterial wilt in District Okara.

Relationship between Farm Management Practices and Potato Bacterial Wilt Incidence

The relationship between farm management practices and potato bacterial wilt (Ralstonia solanacearum), as reported by some farmers in District Okara, Punjab, is captured in the analysis of Table 4. The results suggest that seed source is important for disease prevalence. Farmers who used saved seed had the highest mean disease incidence (64.85%), while those who bought seed from the local market had slightly lower disease incidence (59.32%). However, those using certified seed from the Government (48.21%) or private companies (45.78%) recorded significantly lower levels of bacterial wilt ($p = 0.001$). This supports the findings of Kwambai et al. (2024), who indicated that certified seed is often the primary source of R. solanacearum and enables its introduction and spread of bacterial wilt. Disease incidence was also significantly associated with the practice of crop rotation. Farmers who practiced continuous cultivation of potato reported the highest incidence (67.50%) while those who engaged in regular rotation for 2-3 years reported the greatest reduction in disease levels (42.30%) ($p = 0.000$). These findings confirm those of Liyama et al. (2022), who noted that crop rotation with non-solanaceous plants minimizes the density of soil-borne inoculum of the pathogen. All other factors remaining constant, fields irrigated by flood irrigation had the highest disease incidence (66.48%). Field where irrigation is done using drip or sprinkler irrigation had a significantly lower disease incidence (40.87%) ($p = 0.002$). This suggests that the use of flood irrigation disseminates pathogens through surface water that is likely contaminated, as noted by Mwaniki et al. (2019) and Sharma et al. (2022).

Nutrient management also emerged as a critical factor. Increased levels of nitrogen application for instance resulted in higher disease incidence (63.42%) in comparison to balanced NPK fertilization (49.38%) ($p = 0.004$). Similar results were reported by Ali et al. (2022), in which nitrogen in excess weakened the plant defense mechanism and developed favorable conditions for bacterial wilt. The study also revealed that field sanitation measures were very crucial to the spread of the disease. In farms where the tools and equipment were not cleaned, the disease incidence was the highest (65.90%) as opposed to farms where sanitation was practiced and reported much lower disease levels (40.20%) ($p = 0.000$). This supports the findings of Tessema & Seid (2023) that emphasize the point that uncleaned farm tools are a significant means of pathogen spread. Last, the use of resistant varieties was profoundly associated with reduced disease incidence. Farmers using resistant potato varieties were able to record

much lower bacterial wilt incidence (44.72%) in comparison to those having susceptible varieties (63.81%) (p = 0.000). These findings also agree with the study of Khairy et al. (2021), in which the authors described resistant hosts to bacterial wilt as the most practical and long lasting means of controlling the disease.

In summary, the use of certified seeds, crop rotation, balanced fertilization, cover crops, and resistant varieties, along with improved practices of integrated, drip irrigation and crop strict sanitation measures, can minimize the incidence of bacterial wilt and increase the yield of potatoes.

Table 4: Relationship between Farm Management Practices and Potato Bacterial Wilt Incidence (n = 225)

Farm Practice	Category	Mean Disease Incidence (%)	SD	F / t-Value	p-Value
Seed Source	Saved seed	64.85	11.24	7.89	0.001 **
	Local market	59.32	10.47		
	Certified (Govt. agencies)	48.21	9.88		
	Certified (Private companies)	45.78	8.94		
Crop Rotation Practice	No rotation (continuous potato)	67.50	12.15	12.46	0.000 **
	Occasional rotation	55.20	10.96		
	Regular rotation (2–3 years)	42.30	9.35		
Irrigation Method	Flood irrigation	66.48	11.72	9.87	0.002 **
	Furrow irrigation	54.65	10.48		
	Drip/Sprinkler irrigation	40.87	9.13		
Fertilizer Application	Excessive nitrogen use	63.42	11.03	6.15	0.004 **
	Balanced (NPK recommended)	49.38	9.25		
	Random/unplanned application	57.80	10.17		
Field Sanitation	No cleaning	65.90	11.45	10.36	0.000 **
	Occasional cleaning	52.75	10.02		
	Regular cleaning	40.20	8.86		
Use of Resistant Varieties	Yes	44.72	8.94	-8.19	0.000 **
	No	63.81	11.32		

Note:

- Significance levels: *p < 0.05 = Significant*, p < 0.01 = Highly Significant
- F-values were used for variables with more than two categories (ANOVA).
- t-values were used for variables with two categories (Independent t-test).

Chi-square (χ^2) analysis

-The study identified a strong correlation between management practices and educational achievement (χ^2 = 15.67; p = 0.001). This means that farmers above a certain educational attainment level appreciate the value of management and preventive measures such as crop rotation, use of certified seeds, and field sanitation. Having some education means farmers would have little trouble accessing and understanding agricultural educational materials and would be more proactive in making rational decisions in disease management. This is supported by the work of Kwambai et al. (2024), which identified education as a primary determinant in the adoption of technology and better practices in agriculture in developing countries. Farm size was also found to be significant (χ^2 = 12.48; p = 0.002), which means that bigger farms enjoy greater availability of resources such as better quality farming inputs, equipment, and labor, which makes it easier for them to implement integrated management practices. It is also easier for larger farms to appreciate the value of disease control and the long-term justification for spending money on the preventive measures. This is supported by Ali et al. (2022) who pointed out that the availability of resources tends to be the major factor in the adoption of new practices in potato production systems.

Table 5: Chi-square (χ^2) Test Results Showing Association Between Socio-economic Factors and Adoption of Management Practices (n = 225)

Variable	χ^2 Value	df	p-Value	Significance
Education Level	15.67	3	0.001	Highly Significant
Farm Size	12.48	2	0.002	Highly Significant
Farming Experience	8.74	2	0.013	*Significant*
Access to Extension Services	25.12	1	0.000	Highly Significant

Note:

- *p < 0.05 = Significant*, p < 0.01 = Highly Significant
- df = Degrees of Freedom
- Adoption of management practices includes certified seed use, crop rotation, field sanitation, and resistant variety planting.

Farming experience indicated a significant relationship (χ^2 = 8.74; p = 0.013), which suggests that experienced farmers know more about the symptoms and economic consequences of the bacterial wilts, which drives them to use effective control methods. Famers often draw conclusions from the vast reserves of knowledge they gained from farming experiences, which also help them in management of pests and diseases (Tafesse et al., 2018). The availability of extension services had the highest level of correlation with adoption (χ^2 = 25.12; p = 0.000),

indicating that farmers with more frequent contact with extension workers were more likely to apply recommended practices such as the use of resistant varieties, improved field sanitation, and application of balanced fertilizers. This supports the findings of Zhang et al. (2022) and Izuogu et al. (2024), who noted the importance of institutional support and knowledge in driving adoptions. In general, the findings imply that increasing education, improving extension services, and support to resource poor farmers would increase adoption of strategies to control bacterial wilt. This highlights the need for institutional support, along with farmer education, to control soil-borne diseases such as Ralstonia solanacearum.

CONCLUSION

Farmers' management practices are crucial in determining the incidences and the spread of bacterial wilt of potatoes (Ralstonia solanacearum) in District Okara, Punjab, Pakistan. It was found that reliance on uncertified and farm-saved seed, continuous potato monocropping, flood irrigation, excessive nitrogen application, and slack field sanitation are the greatest contributors to the high disease incidence. In contrast, the farms growing certified seeds, practicing crop rotation, drip irrigation and regular tool sanitation reported substantially reduced bacterial wilt prevalence. Results shown that the integration of disease management strategies are helpful in reducing the prevalence of the disease.. Level of education, size of the farm, years of practicing agriculture, and extension services offered were found to have a significant impact on the adoption of recommended practices. In general, more educated farmers and those with better extension contact were found to be aware and adopt more of the sustainable management practices. Hence, disease control requires more farmers training, distribution of certified seeds and resistant varieties, and more extension services. Addressing these issues would promote the sustainable production of potatoes, reduce the control of diseases, improve the food security and income of the rural population in Punjab, other Indian states, and even beyond.

Declarations

Funding

This study didn't receive any funding from any agencies in the public, commercial, or non-profit sector.

Conflicts of Interest

Authors have no conflicts of interest.

Data Availability

Data will be available from the corresponding author upon request.

Ethics Statement

The Institute of Agricultural Extension, Education, and Rural Development at the University of Agriculture, Faisalabad, gave its approval to the human subjects' study. The studies were carried out in compliance with institutional norms and local laws. To take part in this study, the subjects gave their written informed consent.

Authors' Contribution

Ali Nawaz; Conceptualization, Data Curation, Methodology, Writing Original draft, Formal Data Analysis, Writing, Jahanzeb Ali; Review and Editing, Bilal Nadeem; Review, Editing and Writing

Generative AI Statements

The authors declare that no Gen AI/DeepSeek was used in the writing/creation of this manuscript.

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