

Simple inheritance of partial resistance to leaf rust in two wheat cultivars

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The wheat cultivars Westphal 12A and BH1146 were characterized in previous studies as having partial resistance to the leaf rust pathogen *Puccinia triticina*. In the present study, genetic analysis showed that Westphal 12A has three genes that condition resistance in seedling plants, and the gene *Lr34*, which is optimally expressed in adult plants. The three seedling resistance genes in Westphal 12A may be new leaf-rust resistance genes. BH1146 was shown to have the adult plant resistance genes *Lr13* and *Lr34*. Many wheat cultivars with partial resistance to leaf rust may have *Lr13* and/or *Lr34*, or other previously described *Lr* genes.

Keywords: adult plant resistance, partial resistance, *Puccinia triticina*, slow-rusting resistance, *Triticum aestivum*

Introduction

Partial resistance to leaf rust (causal organism *Puccinia triticina*) in wheat (*Triticum aestivum*) has been characterized in an epidemiological sense by examination of components of the disease cycle that affect the rate of rust increase (Caldwell, 1968; Parlevliet, 1989). Latent period, in particular, was identified as an important component of partial resistance (Kuhn *et al.*, 1978; Parlevliet, 1989). In wheat, latent period to leaf rust was inherited oligogenically in various cultivars (Lee & Shaner, 1985; Das *et al.*, 1992; Shaner *et al.*, 1997). In this approach, progeny lines in advanced segregating generations such as F₄ or F₆ were evaluated for latent period. The number of genes was estimated from the number of progeny lines that resembled the resistant or susceptible parents. The genes that conditioned latent period or slow rusting were not characterized individually, as progeny lines with single resistance genes from the resistant parent were not derived using this type of approach. Resistance based on epidemiological characteristics such as slow rusting or reduced latent period length has generally been assumed to be race-nonspecific, and thus to be durable.

Another approach for studying resistance to leaf rust

in wheat has been the genetic isolation and characterization of single genes that condition infection type in seedling tests and the severity of rust infections in field tests (Dyck *et al.*, 1966). In this method, F₁ plants are backcrossed to the susceptible parent and the backcross F₂ (BCF₂) families are examined for segregation of leaf-rust resistance in seedling and field tests. The number of genes conditioning resistance is estimated from the proportion of BCF₂ families that are homozygous susceptible, with rust severity and infection type equal to the susceptible parent. This crossing method allows the resistance genes to be evaluated in a relatively uniform genetic background as the BCF₂ families have a genetic background of 75% of the susceptible parent. Different leaf-rust resistance genes can be observed individually in the segregating BCF₂ families that differ for levels of leaf-rust resistance. Single plant selections from segregating BCF₂ families that differ for leaf-rust resistance can be used to establish progeny lines that have single adult plant resistance genes derived from the resistant parent. Adult plant resistance genes such as *Lr12*, *Lr13* and *Lr22b* condition specific resistance to leaf rust (Bartos *et al.*, 1969; Kolmer, 1997). The adult plant resistance gene *Lr34* was shown to have many characteristics in common with genes that condition slow rusting or partial resistance (Drijepontd & Pretorius, 1989; Rubiales & Niks, 1995).

Broers & Jacobs (1989) studied the inheritance of latent period of leaf rust in the wheat cultivars Westphal 12A and BH1146. Based on segregating progeny lines in the F₅ generation, they concluded that Westphal 12A had three genes, and BH1146 two to three genes, for increased latent period. Van der Gaag & Jacobs (1997)

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tested F₈ lines and concluded that BH1146 carried at least five genes for increased latent period. In the present study, leaf-rust resistance in Westphal 12A and BH1146 was examined using an approach that would allow the isolation and characterization of individual resistance genes in the segregating progeny generations. The objective was to determine whether leaf-rust resistance in these slow-rusting or partially resistant wheat cultivars was due to the presence of previously identified genes such as *Lr13* and/or *Lr34*.

Materials and methods

Seeds of Westphal 12A and BH1146 were obtained from Th. Jacobs, Wageningen Agricultural University, the Netherlands. BH1146 was developed in Brazil from the pedigree of Ponta Grossa 1//Fronreira/Mentana. The origin of Westphal 12A is unclear. Jacobs & Broers (1989) indicated that Westphal 12A was derived from a landrace in Harage, Ethiopia. However, the International Wheat Information System (IWIS) database compiled by CIMMYT (Fox *et al.*, 1997) indicated that a wheat cultivar designated Westphal 12 was derived from the pedigree Logoa-Vermelha//Frontana/Trintecino in Brazil, and was released in 1969.

BH1146 and Westphal 12A were used as pollen parents, and crossed with the leaf-rust-susceptible cultivar Thatcher (Tc). The F₁ plants were used as pollen parents and crossed with Tc. Westphal 12A, BH1146 and BCF₂ families of Tc × Westphal 12A were evaluated for seedling resistance in glasshouse tests with selected isolates of *P. triticina* (Long & Kolmer, 1989). BCF₂ families of Tc × BH1146 were not tested as seedlings, as BH1146 did not have any seedling resistance. Fifteen to 20 seedlings of each BCF₂ family were tested with each isolate of *P. triticina* used. Plants for the seedling tests were seeded in clumps in 25 × 30 cm fibre flats filled with a sand-peat-soil mix. Plants were grown at 20 ± 2°C with 8 h supplemental fluorescent light per day. Nine to 10 days after seeding, the primary leaves were inoculated by atomizing urediniospores suspended in a nonphytotoxic light mineral oil. Inoculated plants were incubated at 100%

RH for 16 h at 20°C. Infection types (IT) on primary leaves were rated 12 days after inoculation using a scale of 0–4 (Long & Kolmer, 1989). Infection types of 0–2⁺ were considered resistant, and infection types 3–4 as susceptible. The BCF₂ families were classified as either segregating or homozygous susceptible. Goodness of fit to segregation ratios in BCF₂ families was determined using χ^2 tests (Steel & Torrie, 1980).

To evaluate adult plant resistance, ≈50 seeds of each BCF₂ family were planted in 2 m rows in a field rust nursery. Susceptible spreader rows of wheat were inoculated with a mixture of *P. triticina* isolates prevalent in the eastern prairie region of Canada (Kolmer & Liu, 1997; Kolmer, 1998). Westphal 12A, BH1146 and Thatcher lines near-isogenic for leaf-rust resistance were evaluated for leaf-rust severity and response in the field nursery. Rust ratings were recorded at the early milk stage (Zadoks growth stage 73–74) when the susceptible check (Thatcher) had a severity and response rating of 70% susceptible (70S). To determine the identity of the adult plant resistance genes in Westphal 12A and BH1146, single heads from resistant plants were selected from BCF₂ families. The selected BCF₂ heads were thrashed individually, and BCF₃ plants derived from a BCF₂ single seed were grown to maturity in a glasshouse. BCF₄ lines derived from BCF₃ plants were evaluated for adult plant resistance in glasshouse tests and also in the field rust nursery. In the glasshouse, flag and penultimate (flag–1) leaves were inoculated with *P. triticina* isolates that were virulent or avirulent to Tc*Lr13*. In the following year's rust nursery, BCF₄ lines from both crosses were compared with Tc*Lr13* and Tc*Lr34* for leaf-rust severity and response. Westphal 12A and BH1146 were also crossed with Tc*Lr13* and Tc*Lr34*, and the progenies were tested in the rust nursery. Approximately 600 F₂ plants from each of the four crosses were evaluated as adult plants for leaf-rust resistance in the field rust nursery.

Results

In seedling tests, Westphal 12A had low infection types

Table 1 Seedling infection types^a and field responses to isolates of *Puccinia triticina* of wheat cultivars Westphal 12A, BH1146 and Thatcher wheat lines with *Lr13* and *Lr34*

Cultivar	Isolate									
	BBB 1-59	KBJ 139-1	MBQ 43-2	MBR 47-1	MFM 6-1	MFQ 53-2	MJB 10-3	TCT HG-3	TJB 50-1	Field severity
Westphal 12A	3+	4	4	3+	; c	; c	4	;22+	4	TR ^b
BH1146	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	3	4	TR–10 MR
Tc <i>Lr13</i>	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	4	80 MR S
Tc <i>Lr34</i>	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	3	20–70 M

^aInfection types according to Long & Kolmer (1989). ;, fleck; c, chlorosis; ;c, flecks with chlorosis.

^bTR, trace level of uredinia; MR, small uredinia with necrosis; MS, moderate size uredinia with chlorosis; M, mixture of small and large uredinia; S, large uredinia without necrosis or chlorosis.

Table 2 Segregation of leaf rust resistance in Thatcher × Westphal 12A and Thatcher × BH1146 BCF₂ families in seedling and field tests

<i>Puccinia triticina</i> isolate	Number of families		Expected	
	Segregating	Susceptible	Ratio	χ^2
Tc ² × Westphal 12A				
Seedling tests				
MFM 6-1	56	24	3 : 1	1.07
TCT HG-3	37	43	1 : 1	0.45
Field mixture ^a	55	16	3 : 1	0.23
			7 : 1	6.53
Tc ² × BH1146				
Field mixture	65	12	3 : 1	3.64
			7 : 1	0.67

^aMixture of *P. triticina* isolates from Canada.

of ;c (chlorotic flecks) to isolates MFM 6-1 and MFQ 53-2, and infection type ;22⁺ to TCT HG-3 (Table 1). Westphal 12A had high infection types of 3⁺ to 4 to the other six *P. triticina* isolates. BH1146 had high infection types of 3⁺ to 4 to all nine isolates. Both cultivars were highly resistant to leaf rust in field tests, with reactions of TR (trace level of uredinia) for Westphal 12A and TR-10 MR (trace level to 10% small uredinia with necrosis) for BH1146.

In seedling tests, the BCF₂ families of Tc × Westphal 12A with isolate MFM 6-1 segregated for at least two genes, as the number of segregating and of homozygous susceptible families approximated a 3 : 1 ratio (Table 2). One of the genes must condition a low-infection type of ;1 (flecks with small necrotic uredinia), as 37 of the segregating families had this infection type, while the other gene must condition a low infection type of ;2 (flecks with small chlorotic uredinia), as 19 segregating families had this infection type (Table 3). Based on infection types to the *P. triticina* isolates, the two genes that conditioned resistance to MFM 6-1 could not be identified as previously characterized *Lr* genes (McIntosh *et al.*, 1995). To isolate TCT HG-3, the BCF₂ families segregated for a single gene that conditioned infection type ;2-2⁺ as the number of segregating

Table 3 Infection types and numbers of BCF₂ families of Thatcher × Westphal 12A in contingency test of independence for segregation of seedling resistance to isolates MFM 6-1 and TCT HG-3 of *Puccinia triticina*

	TCT HG-3		χ^2
	Segregating 22 ⁺ -4	Homozygous susceptible 3 ⁺ 4	
MFM 6-1			
Segregating ;1-2 ⁺ -4	18	19	
Segregating ;2-2 ⁺ -4	11	8	
Homozygous susceptible 3 ⁺ 4	8	16	2.72

Table 4 Infection types and numbers of BCF₂ families of Thatcher × Westphal 12A in contingency table test of independence for segregation of seedling resistance to isolate MFM 6-1 and field resistance to *Puccinia triticina*

Seedling infection type	Field resistance		χ^2
	Segregating	Homozygous susceptible	
MFM 6-1			
Segregating ;1-2 ⁺ -4	25	8	
Segregating ;2-2 ⁺ -4	12	4	
Homozygous susceptible 3 ⁺ -4	18	6	0.006

to homozygous susceptible families approximated a 1 : 1 ratio (Table 2; Table 3). The single gene that conditioned seedling resistance to isolate TCT HG-3 could not be identified as a previously identified *Lr* gene. The BCF₂ families that segregated for two genes for resistance to MFM 6-1 were independent of those families that segregated for a single gene for resistance to TCT HG-3 according to the contingency table test (Table 3).

In the field test, the number of segregating and homozygous susceptible BCF₂ families approximated a 3 : 1 ratio, indicating that two genes from Westphal 12A conditioned resistance to the mixture of *P. triticina* isolates (Table 2). The two genes derived from Westphal 12A that conditioned resistance to isolate MFM 6-1 did not condition field resistance, as the BCF₂ families that segregated for resistance to MFM 6-1 were independent of the families that segregated for field resistance (Table 4). Of the BCF₂ families that were homozygous susceptible to MFM 6-1, 18 segregated for field resistance and six were homozygous susceptible, which also indicated that two genes conditioned field resistance. The BCF₂ families that segregated for resistance to isolate TCT HG-3 also segregated for resistance to the field mixture of *P. triticina* isolates (Table 5). The single gene that conditioned resistance to TCT HG-3 was one of the two genes that conditioned resistance in the field test. Of the BCF₂ families homozygous susceptible to TCT HG-3, 21 segregated for resistance in the field test and 16 were homozygous

Table 5 Infection types and numbers of BCF₂ families of Thatcher × Westphal 12A in contingency test of independence for segregation of seedling resistance to isolate TCT HG-3 and field resistance to *Puccinia triticina*

Seedling infection type	Field resistance		χ^2
	Segregating	Homozygous susceptible	
TCT HG-3			
Segregating ;22 ⁺ -4	33	0	
Homozygous susceptible 3 ⁺ -4	21	16	18.51

Table 6 Adult plant infection types and field resistance to *Puccinia triticina* of Thatcher × Westphal 12A and Thatcher × BH1146 BCF₄ lines

Line	Isolate			Field	Gene present ^a
	TDB 22-1	MBRJ 10-2	MBDS 12-3		
Tc ² × Westphal 12A					
323	3 ⁺	3 ⁺	3 ⁺	10 M	<i>Lr34</i>
Tc ² × BH1146					
387	3 ⁺	3 ⁺	3 ⁺	20-70 M	<i>Lr34</i>
409	2;22 ⁻	3 ⁺	3 ⁺	80 MR S	<i>Lr13</i>
Thatcher <i>Lr13</i>	2	4	4	80 MR S	
Thatcher <i>Lr34</i>	23	23	23	5-40 M	
Thatcher	4	4	4	90 S	

^aM, mixed small and large uredinia; MR, small uredinia with necrosis; S, large uredinia without necrosis or chlorosis.

for resistance: this indicated that the second gene that conditioned resistance in the field test did not condition resistance in seedlings. The BCF₄ line 323, derived from a single plant selection from a BCF₂ family homozygous susceptible to both isolates MFM 6-1 and TCT HG-3, had a field leaf rust severity and reaction similar to Tc*Lr34* (Table 6). Approximately 600 F₂ adult plants from the cross of Tc*Lr34* × Westphal 12A were all resistant in a field test to the mixture of *P. triticina* isolates. Five susceptible plants were found in the F₂ progeny of Tc*Lr13* × Westphal 12A, which indicated that *Lr13* was not in Westphal 12A. A total of four leaf-rust resistance genes was found in Westphal 12A. Two genes conditioned seedling resistance to isolate MFM 6-1. A single gene conditioned resistance to isolate TCT HG-3, and also resistance to the field mixture of *P. triticina* isolates. A fourth gene, which conditioned adult plant resistance to the mixture of *P. triticina* isolates, was probably *Lr34*.

The number of segregating or homozygous susceptible BCF₂ families in field tests from Thatcher × BH1146 fit both 3 : 1 and 7 : 1 ratios, which indicated that at least two – possibly three – genes conditioned field resistance to the mixture of *P. triticina* isolates (Table 2). The BCF₄ line 387, derived from a single plant selection from a BCF₂ family that segregated for resistance, had a field leaf-rust reaction and severity similar to Tc*Lr34* (Table 6). Line 387 had infection type of 3⁺ to isolates TDBJ 22-1, MBRJ 10-2, and MBDS 12-3, which was slightly higher than the 2-3 infection type these isolates had to Tc*Lr34*. The BCF₄ line 409, derived from a single plant selection from a BCF₂ family that segregated for resistance, had a field leaf rust severity and reaction similar to Tc*Lr13*. Line 409 also had adult plant infection types to isolates TDBJ 22-1, MBRJ 10-2 and MBDS 12-3 very similar to Tc*Lr13*. Approximately 600 F₂ plants from each of Tc*Lr13* × BH1146 and Tc*Lr34* × BH1146 were all leaf-rust resistant, which indicated that BH1146 has *Lr13* and *Lr34*.

Discussion

The wheat cultivars Westphal 12A and BH1146 were

shown to have leaf-rust resistance genes that could be isolated and characterized individually. Both Westphal 12A and BH1146 probably have the adult plant resistance gene *Lr34*. Westphal 12A also has a gene that conditioned an intermediate infection type to specific leaf-rust isolates in seedling plants and an intermediate level of field resistance, and two other genes that conditioned seedling resistance, but not field resistance. Broers & Jacobs (1989), using data from F₃ and F₅ lines from crosses with the susceptible parent Little Club, estimated that Westphal 12A had three genes that prolonged the latent period, and BH1146 two to three genes. Broers & Jacobs (1989) also indicated that *Lr13* may be present in BH1146, in addition to the genes that affected latent period. In regard to the number of genes that conditioned field resistance, the results of this study are in general agreement with Broers & Jacobs (1989), as Westphal 12A was determined to have two genes that conditioned field resistance, and BH1146 also had at least two genes. Resistance gene *Lr13* was also identified in progeny lines derived from BH1146.

Van der Gaag & Jacobs (1997) further examined F₈ lines of BH1146 × Little Club for latent period distribution. Four to seven genes for prolonged latent period in BH1146 were estimated based on only one of 75 F₈ lines having a latent period equal to BH1146, and two lines having latent periods equal to the cultivar Morocco, used as the susceptible standard. However, if Little Club is used as the susceptible standard, then 57 of the F₈ lines had a latent period longer than Little Club, and 18 lines had latent periods equal to or shorter than Little Club. This grouping of segregating lines fits a 3 : 1 ratio, which indicated that BH1146 has two genes for prolonged latent period relative to the susceptible parent Little Club.

Rubiales & Niks (1995) characterized BH1146, Tc*Lr34*, Tc*Lr13* and Thatcher for infection type, latent period and infection frequency (number of uredinia per leaf area). Tc*Lr13* had chlorotic flecks with few susceptible-type uredinia. Thatcher and BH1146 both had large uredinia without necrosis or chlorosis. Tc*Lr34* had a significantly longer latent period than Thatcher, but did not differ significantly from BH1146

when tested with the same leaf-rust isolates. BH1146 also did not differ significantly from Thatcher or TcLr13 for latent period. Thatcher and BH1146 did not differ significantly for uredinia per leaf area, while TcLr34 and TcLr13 had significantly lower uredinia per leaf area. Based on differences in uredinia per leaf area and histological observations, Rubiales & Niks (1995) concluded that the resistance expressed in BH1146 was not due to Lr13 or Lr34.

Using an approach that allowed the isolation and characterization of single resistance genes, it was determined that adult plant resistance to leaf rust in Westphal 12A was conditioned by Lr34 and a previously unidentified gene which also conditioned resistance in seedlings to specific *P. triticina* isolates. In BH1146, Lr13 and Lr34 conditioned adult plant resistance. From both crosses, progeny lines were derived that had resistance levels similar or identical to Lr34, and F₂ progenies from crosses with TcLr34 did not segregate for susceptible plants, which indicated that Lr34 was present in both Westphal 12A and BH1146. Progeny lines derived from BH1146 had infection types and rust severities similar to TcLr13, and F₂ progenies from a cross with TcLr13 did not segregate for susceptible plants, which indicated that BH1146 has Lr13. If Westphal 12A originated from Brazil, the pedigree given by the IWIS database (Fox *et al.*, 1997) includes Frontana, which has both Lr13 and Lr34. Fronteira, which is in the pedigree of BH1146, has been postulated to have Lr13 (Roelfs, 1988). Roelfs *et al.* (1992) indicated that BH1146 has Lr13 and Lr34. The leaf-rust resistance conditioned by Lr13 and Lr34 has similar characteristics to the partial resistance conditioned by BH1146, as determined by Drijepondt & Pretorius (1989). Adult plants with Lr13 often have 22⁺ (small to moderate size uredinia with chlorosis) infection type to isolates that produced 3⁺ to 4 infection types in seedling plants (Kolmer, 1997). For Lr34, Rubiales & Niks (1995) cited increased resistance at low temperatures; the absence of hypersensitive response; long latent period; and smaller uredinia size as characteristics that this gene shares with partial resistance. Rubiales & Niks (1995) also determined that TcLr34 had a significantly higher infection frequency than BH1146. This might be caused by differences in cultivar backgrounds, as a resistance gene may be expressed differently in various genetic backgrounds (Dyck & Samborski, 1968; Pretorius *et al.*, 1990). It is also possible that adult plants of BH1146 and TcLr34 at the same growth stage would be sufficiently different in terms of plant age to affect the infection frequency. As the two wheat lines differ for maturity, flag leaves at the same growth stage would differ for age. BH1146 and Thatcher did not differ significantly for latent period or infection frequency (Rubiales & Niks, 1995), yet Thatcher was highly susceptible to leaf rust and BH1146 was very resistant in field tests in Canada. Latent period or other measures of partial resistance may not always be predictive of adult plant leaf-rust

resistance in wheat. The presence or absence of leaf-rust resistance genes in wheat should be determined by direct genetic analysis, as indirect methods such as measurement of latent period may not be adequate.

The premise of partial, slow rusting, or horizontal resistance, has been that epidemiological components of the disease cycle which affect the rate of pathogen increase confer a nonspecific resistance. As this partial or slow-rusting resistance is nonspecific, it is usually implied to be a durable type of resistance. Adult plants with Lr34 were shown to condition an intermediate level of resistance to all *P. triticina* isolates that have been tested (Kolmer, 1997), thus having an incomplete, apparently nonspecific resistance. In North America, wheat cultivars with Lr34 have displayed at least moderate levels of resistance to leaf rust, as this gene was introduced in wheat germplasm in the mid 1960s (Kolmer *et al.*, 1991). Genotypes with Lr34 can also express variable amounts of leaf-rust severity as adult plants in glasshouse and field tests. In an inheritance study of latent period with advanced inbred lines (Van der Gaag & Jacobs, 1997; Shaner *et al.*, 1997), the intermediate and variable level of resistance conditioned by Lr34 could be interpreted as being conditioned by more than one gene. Many of the wheats that have been characterized as having partial or slow-rusting resistance to leaf rust may actually have Lr34 as a major component of their resistance. Genetic analysis of leaf-rust-resistant wheat cultivars should be conducted in such a manner as to allow a direct comparison of results with previous studies. Only by their isolation and characterization can resistance genes be conclusively identified and assessed as potential new sources of leaf rust resistance.

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