

Cereals

Cereal drilling is now underway with winter wheat and barley being drilled in “cleaner” fields where grass weed issues are not the focus. Where blackgrass is a problem, drilling is being delayed until at least mid-October to benefit from reduced blackgrass emergence and allow multiple opportunities to use total herbicides to spray off weeds in the September and October peak emergence period. Moist soils at this later timing should allow for rapid emergence of weeds and good efficacy from both total and residual herbicides.

When drilling cereals following good pre-drilling management, it is important to minimise soil disturbance. Moving more soil at this point will encourage a further flush of weeds from below and will result in poorer weed control in the crop. Growers are aiming to drill and consolidate with as little disturbance of the soil at depth as possible. In high weed populations and when drilling later it is important to increase seed rates to be more competitive with weeds that emerge. This also ensures adequate plant populations as the establishment percentage is likely to decrease with the more difficult conditions that are common to later drilling.

Wheat bulb fly prevalence is being monitored by the AHDB project “Autumn survey of wheat bulb fly incidence”. Of the 23 sites being monitored only 5 sites fall into the moderate risk category and the remaining are all low risk indicating that this year looks like it will be a low incidence year for the pest. However, where wheat bulb fly is a persistent problem on farms, use of a seed treatment should be considered.

Oilseed Rape

Temperatures have fallen this month to an average of 12°C which is 2°C below the long-term average. This has slowed cabbage stem flea beetle infestation pressure but has also slowed crop development. Where crops were drilled early and now have a significant leaf area, the pest is less of a problem but those crops drilled later in September will be slower to develop from the 1-2 true leaf stage and beyond.

Later drilled crops will be monitored carefully for signs of significant cabbage stem flea beetle and slug attack and treated accordingly. Nutrition and trace elements are also being considered to help promote more vigorous growth and a larger and more resilient crop going into the winter.

If slug pellets are required, growers will be mindful to comply with the metaldehyde stewardship guidelines. The Metaldehyde Stewardship Group (MSG) has launched an enhanced campaign for 2017 which has highlighted four key stewardship points.

- No pellets should be allowed to fall within a minimum of 10 metres of any field boundary or watercourse (this is an increase from the previous 6m limit).
- Metaldehyde slug pellets must only be used as part of a wider Integrated Pest Management (IPM) programme. Factors such as soil and stubble management, planting methods, weather, trapping and monitoring should all be considered as part of slug control programmes.
- A field’s soil type, topography and proximity to a watercourse are key to whether metaldehyde applications could pose a risk that will have an impact drinking water quality, and should always be considered.
- Think ‘B.I.R.D’ before applying. This stands for **B**uffer, **I**’m legal, **R**ecords, and **D**ose.

Risk of Phoma leaf spot is now high across the country due to the recent rainfall events. Phoma leaf spot symptoms are already being found in early drilled crops in the South East of England. Additional rainfall will lead to spore release and further spread of the disease, first symptoms are usually seen 2-3 weeks following sporulation, dependant on temperature. Smaller backward crops are most at risk from the disease as spores can spread to the stem faster and form canker.

E-Bulletin

News

The Agriculture and Horticulture Development Board (AHDB) and the British Beet Research Organisation (BBRO) have announced a new research partnership to improve on-farm understanding of soil health by benchmarking current academic and industry knowledge to develop indicators of soil biology and soil health.

The NFU have raised concerns about problems with the Rural Payments Agency (RPA) approach to remapping farms, which they fear threatens to delay support payments, which are due to start reaching farmers in early December.

A French government spokesman has announced that France plans to phase out the use of glyphosate by 2022.

National Head of Agriculture at Barclays, Mark Suthern, has announced that Barclays is introducing higher apprenticeships in agriculture to support the UK agriculture industry and those seeking apprenticeship and development roles. "We are proud to establish our first banking apprenticeship in Agriculture" he said.

Event: Winter Technical Farmer Conference - Sustainable Productivity - 15th November 2017, 9.00 am
Kingsgate Conference Centre, Peterborough, PE1 4YT

Speakers:

- Allan Wilkinson (Head of Agriculture, HSBC)
- Dr Alison Bentley (Head of Genetics & Breeding, NIAB)
- Sebastian Graff-Baker (Partner - Andersons Midlands)
- Alastair Leake (W&GCT, Allerton Project)
- Dr Jackie Stroud (Soil Scientist & Ecologist, Rothamsted).

[More detail and bookings >>](#)