



PROCAM
AGRONOMY THAT DELIVERS™

Technical Update
September
'17

NEW SEASON POINTERS

While harvest 2017 is coming to an end next year's crops are already being established with pest and disease issues to be addressed. EFA rule changes may impact on cropping plans.



The wet conditions in August may have hindered harvest but they have encouraged a rapid emergence of next year's oilseed rape crop. This contrasts with the problems of establishment - at least in the east and south east - in dry conditions last autumn.

Getting the crop off to a vigorous start is critical to making it tolerant of potential pest and disease problems. Foremost amongst them is Cabbage Stem Flea Beetle (CSFB). Warmer weather in the latter part of August saw an increase in CSFB adult activity with the appearance of the familiar 'shotholes' in newly emerging cotyledons and leaves.

Insecticide options to control all stages of CSFB are limited. Increasing resistance to pyrethroid insecticides is restricting their effectiveness against CSFB adults and larvae but development work by ProCam has highlighted ways to optimise the performance of these products. Any control programme

should start with pyrethroids before considering the other limited alternatives. Try not to spray until absolutely necessary to avoid driving further resistance. Your ProCam agronomist will have the latest information on the insecticide options available against CSFB and ways to maximise their efficacy.

While a lot of the focus is on CSFB other pest issues need to be borne in mind.

Turnip Sawfly is a sporadic pest, particularly in mild autumns, typically transferring from other brassica crops e.g. stubble turnips.

The black caterpillar larvae can cause severe and dramatic defoliation in localised areas and occasionally across the entire crop. Fortunately pyrethroid insecticides are still a very effective option on this pest.

More problematic can be controlling aphids, notably *Myzus persicae*, the vector for the yield robbing Turnip Yellow Virus (TuYV). These aphids are resistant to both pyrethroids and pirimicarb (Aphox) and require alternative insecticides e.g. pymetrozine (Plenum) or thiacloprid (Biscaya) for effective control.

Treatments should be applied as soon as aphids are found in crops and especially if this occurs in the early (4-5 leaf) stages of crop development. TuYV has been shown in trials to have the potential to reduce yields by up to 30%. Symptoms of infection are not easily diagnosed and are easily confused with many other oilseed rape deficiencies and disorders.

The first consideration for autumn disease control in oilseed rape will focus on phoma. The release of infecting spores from volunteer plants or crop debris occurs when there has been 20 days with significant rain from the 1st of August. The familiar leaf spots tend to occur once 120 day degrees have been accumulated after the infecting spore has landed on a leaf. These weather criteria mean that the appearance of phoma in oilseed rape crops is variable from season to season.

This year's wetter August could mean an earlier infection and a requirement for fungicide treatments before mid-October. Fungicides against phoma are largely protectant and need to be applied as soon as 10% of plants in a crop are showing the leaf spot symptoms.

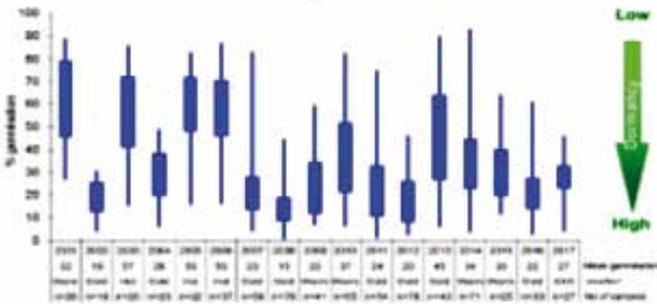
Infection occurring earlier on smaller crops is more threatening as there is a greater chance of the fungus growing down the shorter leaf petioles into the stem potentially causing damaging stem cankers. Early infection may also require a follow-up fungicide to ensure the crop is protected through the whole autumn.

CULTIVATION PLANNING

AUTUMN 2017



Dormancy 2001-2017



Early indications from ADAS are that blackgrass seed shed from this year's plants has a moderate to high dormancy. However, irrespective of any dormancy factor the weather through much of August provided ideal conditions to promote germination of all weed seeds; suggesting that stubble cultivations and 'stale seedbeds' may be effective in reducing weed competition this season. In many cases the first 'flush' of grass weeds was removed by a pre-harvest glyphosate.

N.B. any dormancy factor only applies to seed shed this year. Old seed in the soil from previous seasons will have no dormancy restrictions and should germinate quickly in warm, moist soils.

Cultivation strategy and the value from a stale seedbed will depend to a large extent on weather conditions through the next few weeks. Wet soils and a wet post-harvest period would indicate that early preparation of a stale seedbed will provide the best opportunity to maximise weed germination and 'greening up'. Try to keep cultivations shallow - most blackgrass seed germinates in the top 5cm of soil - and creating a firm 'seedbed' will encourage germination, allowing for control with glyphosate. Where high seed numbers have been shed it may well be worth repeating the cultivation cycle to encourage a further flush.

If soil conditions are dry at and post-harvest and look set to remain so for some time, the value of stale seedbeds is likely to diminish. In dry soils germination and seed reduction will be limited. In these conditions leaving stubbles untouched and seed exposed to the elements may be a better option. Seed losses from natural 'predation' can be significant and burying seed in dry soils will simply protect it without promoting germination.

A key factor in cultural control of grass weeds is delayed drilling. Time of sowing will depend obviously on seedbed

conditions and impending weather threats but also on the potential grass weed population. Where high numbers are anticipated i.e. >400 plants/m² drilling should be delayed into the latter half of October. Earlier drilling i.e. early October should only be contemplated where lower populations are likely. Later drilling allows more time for blackgrass to emerge pre-drilling and reduces weed vigour. More importantly it is more likely to offer better conditions to optimise the performance of soil acting residual herbicides.

EFA CHANGES

BPS YEAR 2018



The European Agriculture Commission has updated the 'greening' rules for 2018. The main changes, which will come fully into effect from the 1st January 2018 include a complete ban on the use of plant protection products on Ecological Focus Area (EFA) land. This will apply to fallow land, EFA catch and cover crops and EFA nitrogen-fixing crops. One recent clarification has been that these rules will apply from the time of sowing the crop, even if this is before the 1st January 2018. It also applies to seed dressings.

Other changes to the greening rules are that EFA catch crops must be maintained for a minimum of eight weeks starting from the 20th August 2018 - so must be retained until at least the 14th October 2018. The period for EFA cover crops remains at October 1st to January 15th of the following year.

Plant protection products may still be applied to nitrogenfixing crops grown as 'crops' to fulfil the crop diversification element of greening. The ban only comes into force where the crops are also used to meet the EFA greening requirement.

Similarly, fallow land can still be claimed as both crop and EFA provided no plant protection products are used in the fallow period (1st January to 30th June). Using traditional means i.e. cultivation and topping for weed control could be an option. Establishing wild bird mixes, pollen and nectar species or temporary grass on fallow areas could also be options to consider.

The changes could place more emphasis on using the hedge and buffer strip options to make up the EFA requirements. Catch/cover crops may also feature more prominently - not least for their value as part of a grass weed control programme.

Your ProCam agronomist will have full details of the EFA changes and will be pleased to discuss your greening options for 2017/18