



PROCAM
AGRONOMY THAT DELIVERS™

Technical Update
August '18

HARVEST POINTERS

Harvesting is in full swing but consideration must be given to early season new crop husbandry to ensure optimum crop establishment and weed control strategies.



After the heat and lack of rain through much of June and July, controlling slugs may not be thought of as a high priority. However, slugs are remarkably resilient to adverse conditions and will return in numbers as soon as wetter, cooler conditions return. The increased prevalence in many areas of the Spanish slug - *arion vulgaris*, which is more adapted to hot, dry conditions, may exacerbate this effect. The use of metaldehyde based slug pellets is currently under review and changes to products, dose rates and overall use is expected in the near future. However, for the coming autumn product availability and stewardship guidelines remain the same as last year.

N.B. Remember the requirement for a 10m buffer zone around all field boundaries - introduced in 2017.

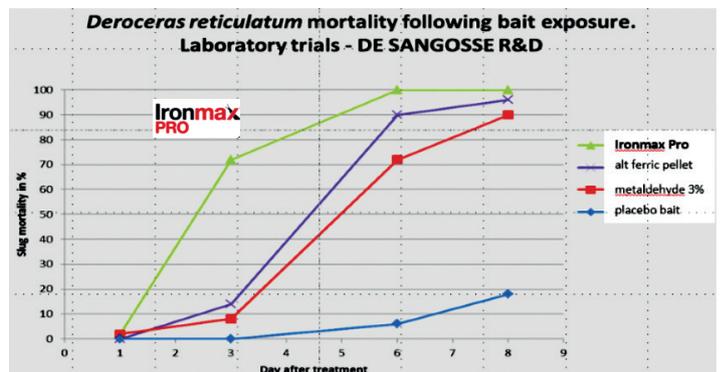
Check out the full stewardship guidelines and recommendations at www.getpelletwise.co.uk.

With impending restrictions, on metaldehyde and more stringent stewardship requirements, now could be the time to switch to a ferric phosphate option for slug control. Ferric phosphate is an effective and viable alternative to metaldehyde. It works as a stomach poison; once eaten there is no recovery.

It impairs the digestion process and limits the ability of a slug to process food. Feeding stops almost immediately and slugs retreat underground to die. For this reason the

benefits can be less visible; fewer dead slugs are seen on the soil surface but a visible reduction in the amount of plant damage quickly follows application.

A slug pellet is the only applied pesticide in agriculture where the target has to be attracted to the pesticide. The key to successful control is pellet quality, which is made up of 4 criteria - spreadability/ballistics, attractiveness, palatability and persistence. Ironmax Pro is a ferric phosphate option that fulfils all these criteria to very high levels. The formulation includes a specific slug attractant and has been proven in trials to work as quickly and as effectively as metaldehyde.



It is important to utilise as many cultural control options as possible to reduce the reliance on pellets as the sole means of slug control.

- Remove any 'green bridge' which offers slugs a food source and shelter
- Soil cultivation, including ploughing, significantly reduces slug populations and exposes eggs to the surface for desiccation
- Move any trash
- Produce a fine seedbed (essential as well for residual herbicides) and roll if possible
- Conserve natural predators

Talk to your ProCam Agronomist about integrated slug control for the new season and include Ironmax Pro among your pellet options.

CULTIVATIONS

AUTUMN 2018



The heat of July encouraged another early start to harvest with a number of wheat fields being cut before the end of the month. The full impact of the drought on yields and quality will become more apparent as harvest proceeds.

Obviously, as harvest proceeds thoughts quickly turn to next year's cropping and preparing seedbeds for the 2018/19 season. Much of the effort in cultivations is focused on weed control, especially grass weeds notably blackgrass. Typically these days seedbeds need to be prepared with the aim of optimising residual, soil acting herbicide performance. These require finer and firmer seedbeds than might have once been thought of as a 'good autumn seedbed' for winter crops.

In the haste to turn the ground over, optimum stubble management for the dominant weed species in the individual field can be overlooked. Various studies on the effects of different stubble cultivations on a range of weeds has shown that only 3 weeds benefited from early post-harvest cultivations - volunteer cereal, sterile brome and soft brome. It may seem counter-intuitive but all other grass species and shed oilseed rape seed gave better germination when cultivations were delayed and seed was left on the surface to mature and germinate. Unless there has been significant rain the dry soil conditions of late July will favour a delay to cultivations. This will help weed seeds mature and may ultimately produce a better stale seedbed effect.

If there is sufficient moisture a compromise approach would be a shallow, superficial cultivation followed by consolidation to move seeds into moisture and ensure good seed/soil contact to encourage rapid germination. Going too deep will encourage moisture loss and move seeds to depths where they are less likely to germinate and are less likely to be picked up by birds and other predators. Whatever the dominant weed species the aim with all cultivations must be to adopt a flexible approach and to react to the individual field/farm/weather circumstances.

The deep and widespread soil cracking caused by the dry soil conditions in July is likely to have been more effective than any cultivator in correcting soil structural problems. Use a spade and check for soil pans to be certain that any deep loosening is needed or worthwhile before attaching the sub-soiler. If soils remain dry, moling also will not be an effective option, at least in the short term.

OILSEED RAPE

CROP ESTABLISHMENT



Cabbage stem flea beetle (CSFB) is still a threat to oilseed rape this autumn, as last year there were no neonicotinoid seed dressings available and no changes to the postemergent insecticide options.

Although CSFB are often found in high numbers at harvest they soon move into shelter to aestivate, i.e. rest, for much of August. The adult CSFB typically return in late August/early September to move onto the newly emerging crop and cause the familiar 'shotholing'.

There have been few consistencies in recent years in devising strategies to reduce the CSFB threat. Drilling earlier in August can help, but sowing too early can bring more difficulties with disease control, excessive canopy size and other pests e.g. cabbage root fly. ProCam trials testing the use of 'nurse' crops, e.g. mustard, to divert the attention of the CSFB from the crop plants, have shown some promising results. This obviously relies on utilising Clearfield varieties to eventually remove the partner brassica with imazamox based herbicides.

Easier said than done, but the key to oilseed rape establishment is drilling into good quality, moist seedbeds or, if dry, to only drill if rain is imminent.

Starter fertilisers, e.g. MZ Excelerator GT or Umostart, which place N&P close to the seed at drilling can encourage early, rapid root development — not an option suitable for all drilling/establishment options. Otherwise, ensure that base nutrients and soil p.H. are all at adequate levels to avoid any restriction to growth. Early post-drilling N will promote growth; up to 30 kg/ha is allowed to be applied to oilseed rape in the autumn under NVZ rules.

Post crop-emergence foliar application of nutrients and growth promoters e.g. Universal Bio, Hadron and phosphites maintain and support continued rapid crop growth. Evidence from ProCam's 4Cast database suggests that oilseed rape sown after spring barley may need more nutritional support than crops sown after winter cereals or fallow.

Insecticide options are limited and further affected by resistance issues. Work by ProCam last year has shown certain adjuvants appear to improve insecticide activity.

Check with your ProCam Agronomist for the latest nutrient and insecticide options to get your oilseed rape off to the best possible start.