



PROCAM
AGRONOMY THAT DELIVERS™

Technical Update
Sept '19

NEW SEASON POINTERS

Rains in August interrupted harvest and have impacted on cereal quality, but did create favourable conditions for oilseed rape establishment and early autumn cultivations.



A wet August provided plenty of soil moisture to encourage oilseed rape drilling as and when land was cleared in a difficult and delayed harvest. Drilling into moisture is almost certainly the key factor to getting the crop off to a vigorous start.

Speedy crop development is critical in making the crop more tolerant of potential pest and disease problems. Foremost amongst them is Cabbage Stem Flea Beetle (CSFB). The focus is to get the crop well established before the pest awakens from its diapause (resting stage) in late August/early September. The high temperatures over the August bank holiday appear to have stimulated the beetles to appear earlier than recent years, at least in the east of the UK, with reports of grazing and the characteristic 'shotholing' appearing in crops from the cotyledon stage onwards.

Getting the base fertiliser right along with applications of N will help to ensure crops are not limited by nutrient shortages. Recent development work by ProCam has also shown the benefits in early season crop growth from applications of nutrient based biostimulants. In trials at Nottingham University large improvements, around 30%, in both root and shoot growth were seen from applications of these products at the early true leaf stages. For autumn 2019 ProCam have introduced an oilseed rape specific product with a balanced blend of micro nutrients and biostimulants tailored to the requirements of the oilseed rape crop.

Check with your ProCam agronomist that this product features in your oilseed rape agronomy programme.

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 but occasionally across the entire crop. Fortunately pyrethroid insecticides are still a very effective option on this pest.

Also problematic is aphid control, 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. thiacloprid (Biscaya) for effective control. Interestingly, top variety performers in oilseed rape trials this year have typically been TuYV resistant varieties; perhaps suggesting that this disease is having a greater impact on oilseed rape yields than is often attributed to it. Insecticide treatments for TuYV 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.

Early autumn is a challenging time for oilseed rape establishment, but with close monitoring and appropriate use of available inputs a successful outcome is achievable.

CULTIVATIONS



AUTUMN
2019

Dormancy in blackgrass is determined by the weather conditions during seed maturation in late June/early July. While perhaps not quite as hot and dry as 2018, conditions were, generally, favourable so, a low to moderate dormancy might be anticipated for this autumn.

N.B. any assessment of grass seed dormancy, only applies to seed shed this summer. Seed already in the ground from previous seasons will have no dormancy and should germinate quickly in favourable conditions.

Although it may seem counter intuitive, not rushing to cultivate fields, can aid weed control. Leaving stubbles uncultivated allows seed to germinate and be eaten by birds and other predators. Cultivations will bury seed, limiting predation and can induce deeper dormancy.

Keeping cultivations shallow and avoiding inversion tillage will hold weed seed in the top 5 cm of the soil where it is more likely to germinate. Consolidation with rolls or a press after the primary cultivation will further improve germination. Promoting a vigorous flush of blackgrass optimises the opportunity to reduce the weed burden with glyphosate before drilling.

With evidence that grass weed tolerance to glyphosate is increasing. It is critically important to maintain a correct dose (an absolute minimum of 540 gms glyphosate per hectare) to limit the risk of developing weed resistance to glyphosate.

Ultimately, the 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 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 provide better conditions to allow soil acting residual herbicides to work to their optimum. Any residual herbicides should be applied within 24-48 hours of drilling and certainly pre-emergence of crop and grass weeds.

SLUG CONTROL



METALDEHYDE
UPDATE

As has been widely reported the legal challenge to the ban on metaldehyde has been upheld in the High Court. Official notification from the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) confirms that metaldehyde is back to its pre December 2018 status. Sale and distribution of existing stocks expires on 31st December 2020 with a final use up date of 31st December 2021. Applications for product re-authorisation remain outstanding and Defra will be required to decide whether to grant re-authorisation or revoke existing authorisations in accordance with Article 46 of the EC regulation. HSE has indicated that the decision on re-registration will be made as soon as possible.

In the meantime metaldehyde products can be purchased and used in accordance with their labels and users should follow the Get Pelletwise best practice guidelines. Availability of metaldehyde will be limited as manufacturers restricted production in anticipation of the ban. Supplies will rely largely on existing distributor and farm stocks. If slug pellets are required remember to comply with the metaldehyde stewardship guidelines see: getpelletwise.co.uk/home/msg-guidelines

The Metaldehyde Stewardship Group (MSG) launched an enhanced campaign for 2017 and this remains applicable for 2019. Four stewardship steps were highlighted that should be implemented:

1. 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 and helps protect birds and small mammals and provides additional protection to water).
2. 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. If pellet application is required it is important to comply with the MSG guidelines.
3. A field's soil type, topography and proximity to a water course are key to whether metaldehyde applications could be a risk that will have an impact drinking water quality, and should always be considered. Think 'soil, slope and stream'
4. Think 'B.I.R.D' before applying. This stands for Buffer, I'm legal, Records, and Dose.