

BBRO Advisory Bulletin No 5 - W/C 25th April 2015

Drilling update

A return to cool, blustery weather across the sugar beet region with localised heavy rain events have left some fields still very wet again. The BBRO trials team have managed to make further progress drilling remaining trials but the weather is certainly not helping this year and final plots still need to be sown. There are examples of people drilling around wet holes to ensure the bulk of fields are drilled, and at this stage of the season that is understandable particularly with the implications of later drilling on final yield.

Emergence

The most advanced crops are now at two true leaves and emergence from early drilled crops seems to be very good. Some of the later drilled crops have emerged into frosty conditions and there are cases of plants being damaged by these cold temperatures. Usually, plants with damaged cotyledons will grow away from any frost damage. However, plants are most vulnerable to frost damage (and possible plant loss) as they emerge, so check any crops which may fall into this category and monitor for plant recovery.

Generally, plants are emerging well from earlier drilled fields and the showery weather has meant that these crops have not lacked moisture and emergence, at this stage, seems to be fairly uniform. It will be interesting to see how the later drilled crops emerge where seed to soil contact is perhaps not as good.

Second nitrogen applications are underway and thoughts will be turning to weed control programmes. However, the heavy rains of last week have left their toll on some fields with capping/slumping now evident. Where crops have emerged, this should be of little consequence but for those plants still pushing up under a cap, showery weather will be welcome to help remaining plants emerge through this solid layer.

Pests

There are reports of skylark feeding, clipping cotyledons back to the growing point. While some of these crops look particularly stressed, as long as the central growing bud is still present, then the plants should grow away from the damage. It has been suggested that in-field sources of water help to deter such

direct damage. The best thing we could have now would be some warmer weather to help beet grow away from the damage.

Some mouse damage is also being reported where seed cover hasn't been ideal and seedbeds are open due to clod ridden soil structure. Again, this is something which needs careful monitoring as following the mild winter, mouse populations could be higher and can soon clear large areas of a crop.

Finally, the BBRO aphid monitoring programme will start at the beginning of May and we will keep you updated on any aphid or other pest activity if and when this occurs.

***Caution:** this information is based on results of experiments and experience but cannot constitute a recommendation.*

BASIS Points

Two BASIS points in total (not per bulletin) have been allocated for the period between 01/06/15 and 31/05/16 reference CP/43823/1516/g. To claim these points please email michele@basis-reg.co.uk



www.bbro.co.uk