

BBRO Advisory Bulletin No 7 - W/C 16th May 2016

Crop progress

Crops have grown well over the last week, especially with some warmth and moisture in the soil. Lighter land is beginning dry out and growth is slowing but hopefully the forecast rain will remedy this. Crops are generally growing away from any earlier signs of stress but continue to be vigilant for any problem areas of fields. Weeds have also benefited from the warmth and moisture but herbicide programmes are generally working well. Where timings have slipped some weeds are now getting pretty large and will require a robust approach to regain control. Beginning to see some thistles patches appear and potato volunteers are 'greening up' rapidly.

- **Weeds** - where weeds have escaped beyond the cotyledon stage, increasing the amount of contact herbicide activity is helpful and close timing, back-to back- sprays five days apart can also help to get on top of the situation.

Where blackgrass is a concern, it is useful to find a window in the broad-leaved weed herbicide programme to apply a graminicide rather than waiting until the broadleaved weeds are controlled, and then spraying the grass. Label restrictions mean that there is a lengthy time interval requirement between broadleaf and graminicide herbicides and this can make it tempting to wait and spray the grass later, however, it is essential to spray blackgrass before it tillers and for that reason it is better to deal with the blackgrass sooner rather than later.

Weed beet are also showing in fields now and some of the most forward crops are now, or very soon will be, at a stage where they can be hoed. Hoeing can reduce weed beet populations in the crop by up to 80%, but to be really effective it should be done before the weed beet have 4 true leaves after which point they can 'ride around' the hoe blade and re-set. Sharp L-blades are best at this stage for their cutting action and duck-foot, or A-blades have a place later on when beet is larger and soil can be moved against the beet.

Remember that potato volunteers in sugar beet are highly likely to be a source of infection of blight and virus for potato crops. Don't delay in dealing with these as emerging and young potato crops are more susceptible to both at this stage of the season.

- **Leaf miner eggs**, at varying numbers, continue to be found on beet across all areas. The first larvae and mines have also been seen, but the seed treatments remain effective as larvae found were dead. However, active larvae can be found in untreated beet and fat hen. Continue to monitor crops for signs of activity, and remember that seed treatments should give up to 10 weeks protection.
- **Peach-potato aphids** are now being caught in the yellow water pans in all factory areas. Current hotspots include Swayfield, Lincolnshire (63 aphids trapped) and Potton, Bedfordshire (50 aphids trapped) These numbers are quite high for this stage of the season. Again, seed treatments continue to protect the crop and encouragingly large numbers of ladybirds are being seen too.
- **No foliar diseases** to report to date, but downy mildew has been observed in other plant species.
- **Hygiene** - remember that groundkeepers and growth on cleaner loader spoil sites are all likely to be sources of infection of both foliar disease and virus, especially now aphids are being found regularly in crops. It is important that any remaining beet material is sprayed off or buried to remove these sources of infection as soon as possible.

BBRO Field Demonstration Days

Hopefully you have the dates of your nearest BBRO Field Demonstration Day already in your diary. Many of you have already registered and we are looking forward to seeing you there. If you haven't yet registered, please follow the instruction on your invitation. If you have not received an invite, please contact us to register your place.

June 21st – Skylark Garden Centre, Wimblington.

June 23rd – Harling Road, Garboldisham.

June 28th – Morley, Wymondham.

June 30th – Field House Farm, Hibaldstow.

***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



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