



BBRO Advisory Bulletin No 3 - 7th April 2016

Drilling progress

The sound of the hail pelting against the window as I type this serves as an unnecessary reminder of how catchy this spring has been so far. Around 60% of the crop is drilled and the remainder needs a settled spell of weather to allow further progress. Creating seedbeds on stronger soils has been, and continues to be a real challenge and in many cases these fields just need time to dry more. Trying to force a seedbed risks losing what little tilth there is, leaving seeds poorly covered or with poor seed to soil contact. Patience is the key although with time now slipping by it will be important to take the first opportunity to drill once it presents itself.

Emergence

Crops which have been sown have had plenty of moisture and reports are of a very even seed strike in the majority of cases. Radicles are developing well and some crops will not be very far off emerging. Be ready to apply the second dose of nitrogen fertiliser to crops as soon as they have emerged.

Weed Control

Another consequence of the showery weather and later drilling is that some of the larger weeds are surviving seedbed cultivations. There is an opportunity to use a pre-emergence glyphosate in these situations to deal with these larger weeds which might otherwise prove difficult to control with a more conventional herbicide programme. In some cases, glyphosate can be mixed with other selective pre-emergence prays – always read the label and check with manufacturers for tank mix compatibilities.

Of course, warm and showery weather is conducive to rapid beet emergence and if considering using pre-emergence glyphosate, check that there are no beet plants emerging at the time of spraying.

Seed Rates

We have had a couple of queries about the merits or otherwise of reducing seed rates for these later drilled crops as soil temperatures will be higher and emergence better. Our view is clear on this. Higher soil temperatures lead to faster emergence but not necessarily better numbers of established plants. As we have said above, seedbeds are not ideal and it is a false economy to think that saving can be made by reducing seed rates. The target of 100,000 plants per hectare remains the figure to aim for and reducing seed rates will not help at all.

Trials Progress

As with the commercial crop, drilling progress has been somewhat steady. We have some of our major sites drilled as well as one or two smaller trials but there is still much to do and we are busy moving equipment around the countryside to take every opportunity to drill between showers.

Advance Diary Dates

Dates for the four BBRO summer open days have been set and are as follows:

June 21st – Skylark Garden Centre, Wimblington.

June 23rd – Harling Road, Garboldisham.

June 28th – Morley, Wymondham.

June 30th – Field House Farm, Hibaldstow.

We'll keep you updated with full details of these events over the coming weeks.

***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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