



BBRO Advisory Bulletin No 6 - W/C 9th May 2016

The extended drilling season this year has resulted in many crops now being at different growth stages, the most forward established at the 6 leaf stage whilst others are still just emerging. The cold start to drilling had slower emergence and development. Indeed, some of the later crops drilled in warm and good seedbeds have now overtaken those drilled earlier into cold and less than perfect seedbeds. However, the recent injection of heat and especially rain over the last week has really accelerated growth and crops will continue to emerge and develop rapidly over the next week although some cooler temperatures are forecast. The 'watch-out' is to keep a close eye on crops as they develop to ensure you can get the optimum timings on inputs such as nitrogen and particularly herbicides.

- **Stressed crops** - some early drilled crops are showing signs of stress, usually resulting from a combination of cold temperatures, wind blow and in some cases grazing and soil capping. Monitor crops closely for signs of new growth to as many will recover and grow away quickly especially now there is some warmth and moisture in the soil. Where emergence has been affected try to establish an estimate of actual plant population across the whole field in order to make a more informed decision on what action to take. Some re-drilling has been required where capping has been severe and also in a few cases for wind blow. One of our trial sites, despite the presence of a barley cover crop, required re-drilling as a result of wind blow.
- **Nitrogen** – inevitably many crops have had their second dose of nitrogen applied later than usual but remember the target is to apply all the nitrogen by full emergence. Again, keep a careful eye on emergence for later drilled crops.
- **Herbicide programmes** are well underway and the recent warm weather resulted in a large flush of weeds which are now racing through their growth stages. Weeds are easiest to kill when they are small and when they are actively growing and wherever possible it is important not

to let timings slip. If sprays are delayed though inclement weather, then a back-to-back spray 5-7 days apart can be a useful tactic to get the programme back on track. Remember to check on the minimum beet crop growth stages and maximum weed growth stages for different herbicides. Guidance on this is available from the BBRO Reference Book.

- **Volunteer potatoes** are emerging and some are approaching the 10cm stage where they become ready for the first treatment of clopyralid. Clopyralid has activity against many broad-leaved weeds but potato and thistle control are the principal weeds it is used for. Thistles in particular can occur in patches and volunteer potatoes may also have a patchy distribution resulting from variable soil conditions during the potato harvest. Where it is possible to patch spray then this is a useful thing to do as it reduces active ingredient applied to the crop and helps to keep the cost of the herbicide programme down. Marking and identification of any patch treatment is worth considering in order make it easier to locate later in the season when the beet canopy closes up and second or third applications are being made. Alternatively, use GPS to record the position in the field. Using this technology for spraying is becoming more frequently used and will allow individual treatment of problem weeds such as volunteer potatoes. We hope to have such a system available to view at the forthcoming BBRO Field Demonstration Days.
- **Leaf miner** - eggs are being found in all factory areas. However, our experience from 2015 indicates that seed treatments will give up to 10 weeks' protection. No mining activity has been observed to date in the current crop. Hallmark is currently the only approved foliar product available. Continue to monitor crops for both eggs and larvae. The treatment threshold is when the number of eggs and larvae exceeds the square of the number of true leaves. For example, a plant with four true leaves would need a population of 16 or more eggs and larvae to warrant treatment.
- **Aphids** - the BBRO yellow water pans were placed in 30 crops last week, and as a consequence of the recent warm weather *M. persicae* are already being caught at some sites. Again, seed treatments will be protecting the crop but the previous mild winter will ensure the threat of large numbers of aphids migrating into beet remains high.
- **Grazing** - various comments from across the regions have been received about beet grazing due to birds, rabbits and slugs. Damage due to bird/animal attack appears to be an ongoing and increasing problem, although beet will grow away if the growing point is not damaged. Also, slugs have benefited from the mild winter and we are aware of several crops receiving treatments to limit plant losses.

- **Foliar disease** – no reports of downy mildew has been reported to date but keep checking and please contact the BBRO if you record any signs of this disease over the coming weeks.

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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