



## IN BRIEF

- A late start to the season as soil conditions have been cold and wet with very little crop being drilled to date. Patience is required for conditions to come right for drilling.
- On-farm hygiene. Spoil heaps and soil & crop debris under cleaner loaders and around clamps can all act as sources of pest & diseases, destroy and remove.
- Last chance to check drill calibration settings. Accurate and uniform plant population is key to optimising yields.
- Identify where your different varieties are drilled this season by putting markers in the crop or recording their location on a phone or other GPS system.
- Entries to Beet Yield Competition 2019 now open.



## ADVISORY

### Soil temperatures

Soil is still cold and wet at depth (2-4°C) and with frosts still a concern patience is required to allow conditions to come right. Drilling slightly later into good conditions is preferable than drilling into poor conditions as germination, establishment and tolerance of seedling pest and diseases will be compromised. Seed germination will start where soil temperatures are above 3°C but will be slow below 5°C. Some consistent soil temperatures above 5°C are really required. However, just as important as soil temperatures are the physical seedbed conditions.

### Seedbed conditions

Ensure the seedbed provides good seed-soil contact. This will assist with germination, rapid root establishment and plant anchorage. Prepare the seedbed to a depth of 5 – 7 cm with sufficient smaller fine soil particles (<3 mm) around the seed. Consolidation of the seedbed especially on lighter land can help improve seed-soil contact.

At drilling, check ALL seed is fully covered and that the drilling depth is correct. Seed should be drilled between 2 and 3 cm deep. Continue to check regularly as it will vary within fields as well as between each field. Drilling depth should be increased to a maximum of 3.5 cm where conditions become dry. Use clod pushers to remove some of the dry soil if necessary.

### Target Plant populations

Remember that the target plant population is 100,000/ha and typical establishment is usually between 70 – 80 % of the seed population drilled. Drilling at 1.25 units/ha (on 50 cm row widths) will therefore help achieve the target plant population level where establishment is expected to be 80 %.

For crops drilled on 50 cm rows the spacing for 1.25 units/ha is 16 cm.

For crops drilled on 45 cm the spacing target spacing for 1.31 units /ha is 17 cm.

Check the calibration settings on your drill and then check your actual in row spacing regularly, especially if soil conditions change.



Plant establishment is frequently lower on headlands and parts of fields where seedbeds are poor. Higher seed rates should be considered in these areas.

### Varieties

Ensure you avoid drilling those varieties categorised on the RL list as unsuitable for sowing before mid-March, due to the risk of bolting. These include: Sprinbok, Hornet, Senada KWS, Landon, Darnella KWS, Alisha KWS, BTS 470, Leesha KWS & Sandra KWS. The full RL list can be found on the BBRO website <https://bbro.co.uk/sugar-beet-varieties/recommended-list/>

### 'Know where your different varieties are drilled in 2018'

Aim to identify where different varieties have been drilled by placing markers in the soil or using a phone or other GPS system to locate where they are. This is important, allowing different varieties to be checked:

- For herbicide application. Differences between varieties in terms of growth stages and susceptibility to herbicide damage can be important.
- Identifying any potential emergence issues.
- Identifying and targeting any foliar nutritional issues.
- Identifying and targeting pest and disease control.
- Potential priorities for early and late harvest options.
- Harvesting, allowing the operator to check for damage and to change settings if necessary.



### Cultivations

- Tyre selection and correct inflation for cultivations and drilling is of vital importance especially in marginal conditions.
- Monitor cultivator performance, get the spade out both before and after work.
- Select appropriate cultivation – multiple passes of light cultivators can be a false economy over a single pass of heavier equipment.

## Drilling

- Match Drilling speed to seed bed conditions
- Drill for Harvest, know your harvester & operator
- Press wheel & Intermediate press wheel selection and use should be carefully considered in wet soils



## EVENTS

### **Beet Yield Competition.**

Applications are now invited for the 2018 BYC competition. For further info please visit our website <https://bbro.co.uk/on-farm/beet-yield-competition/>

### **Summer Open Days.**

Plans are proceeding for the BBRO Summer Open Days, with lots of opportunities to see our trials in progress and speak directly to the research team and view the RL varieties for 2019.

3<sup>rd</sup> July – Swanton Morley Farm, near Dereham. Norfolk.

5<sup>th</sup> July – Bracebridge, Lincs.

Invites will be released in May.



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## BASIS POINTS

Two BASIS points in total (not per bulletin) have been allocated for the period between 01/06/17 and 31/05/18 reference CP/59324/1718/g. To claim these points please email [michele@basis-reg.co.uk](mailto:michele@basis-reg.co.uk)