



## IN BRIEF

- Good progress with drilling has occurred over the last week but some rapid drying of soils is causing concern.
- If drilling into fields with a poor seedbed or areas of poor seedbeds such as headlands, consider using a higher seed rate. Rolling of cloddy seedbeds may be a consideration.
- Some rapid emergence has been observed from earlier drilled crops under the recent warm conditions. Weeds are also beginning to emerge, and such crops will reach the window for herbicides very soon.
- Keep an eye out for differences between seed treatments where used and don't forget to mark up where different varieties are drilled as you go.



## ADVISORY

### Adjusting seed rates and drilling depth

Rapidly drying soils are causing some concern although this may be alleviated by the forecasted rain this week. Targeting the placement of seed into moist soil is the key to quick and uniform emergence. Normally, the target drilling depth is 2-3cm but in very dry soils, drilling a bit deeper into moist soil will encourage germination. Regularly check your drilling depth and ensure seed is fully covered. If necessary, make any adjustments accordingly but remember this may change across the field, especially where the soil type changes.

Also, remember to check your seed spacing regularly. The BBRO drill testing programme is currently assessing drill performance and results are showing actual seed rates can, often to the surprise of operators, vary considerably from the target population!

In general, seedbeds have been produced with good tilth (see photo) but as some of the heavier soils dry, seedbeds are becoming cloddy with poor seed to soil contact and more variable planting depth.



Consider increasing the seed rate in areas where the seedbed is poor and establishment is likely to be lower. This is frequently the case on headlands but also on some of the heavier land which has produced very cloddy seedbeds.

We have had a couple of queries about the merits of reducing seed rates for later drilled crops. Our view is that the warm temperatures will lead to faster emergence but not necessarily better numbers of established plants. As some seedbeds are less than ideal, it is a false economy to think that savings can be made by reducing seed rates. The target of 100,000 plants per hectare remains the figure to aim for.

A full range of seed rates and spacings based on different expected establishment values were published in the last BBRO Advisory Bulletin and can also be found in the BBRO Reference Book ([www.bbro.co.uk/publications](http://www.bbro.co.uk/publications)).

***BBRO drill testing is a service available to you. This will help monitor:***

- ***Seed population***
- ***Drilling depth and moisture levels***
- ***Monitor and benchmark row unit performance***

***The test will not interrupt or slow your normal drilling operation, but it will give you confidence that the right amount of seed is being drilled in the right place. Those interested should contact their British Sugar Area Manager to organise a test.***

## **Rolling**

It is difficult to provide a general recommendation for rolling, as it depends very much on individual field conditions and every field is different, especially where land continues to dry differentially. However, it is worth considering this as an option if seedbeds on heavy soils are poor and cloddy; also, if planting depth is poor and seed is being left on the surface. However, don't roll if heavy rain is forecast. One option may be to just roll those areas of field where this is needed most to reduce the risk.

## **Planting records and variety identification**

Ensure you have good traceability of seed once sown and records of where and when different varieties have been planted. This will allow you to know where to look for any differences in their performance, but also help when deciding to apply herbicides. Growth stages may be slightly different, and this is important to ensure you work within the minimum growth stages for application and don't set the crop back. A list of these are available and can be found in the BBRO Reference Book ([www.bbro.co.uk/publications](http://www.bbro.co.uk/publications)).

The same applies to any different seed treatments you have used. Any differences are more likely to be apparent between emergence and the 6-leaf stage; these may be a matter of a few days apart so regular observation is recommended. It is also useful to know where any BCN tolerant varieties are located as this will help with future soil sampling and interpretation of results.

## Nutrition

As early drilled crops reach full emergence don't delay with your second application of nitrogen. Crops are likely to develop canopies rapidly and will need adequate nutrients. Sufficient nitrogen is essential for leaf growth. We expect canopies to grow rapidly this season so don't delay in applying manganese too. There were a lot symptoms of manganese deficiency seen in crops last year when the canopy grew rapidly. Don't wait until you see the symptoms. Many products can be mixed with herbicides creating a good opportunity to apply much needed nutrients to the crop.



## EVENTS

### Beet Yield Challenge.

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

**Morley Innovation Day - 21<sup>st</sup> June.** Join the BBRO at the Morley Innovation Day, hosted by The Morley Agricultural Foundation and organised by the AHDB and NIAB. For more info check out the BBRO Events page <https://bbro.co.uk/events/>

**COMING SOON** -your invitation to the BBRO Summer Open Days:

**BEET 2018** 3<sup>rd</sup> July @ Swanton Morley  
5<sup>th</sup> July @ Bracebridge

BBRO's targeted approach to sugar beet growing



## CONTACTS

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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)