



IN BRIEF

Welcome to the first BBRO Bulletin of the year!

We've received lots of questions about whether drilling should proceed, especially as soil conditions and temperatures are improving. Some crops have already been drilled.

Our advice is to wait and then proceed with great caution as the risk of bolting is higher when drilling early.

- Make sure that any early drilled varieties are NOT listed as unsuitable for drilling BEFORE mid-March on the Recommended List. Other varieties are at a lower risk of bolting but this is not a guarantee that they won't bolt
- Check drills for set-up and calibration
- Aphid (*Myzus persicae*) activity in other crops is being frequently reported. On-farm hygiene critical, remove potential sources of virus as a priority



Photo: Aphids feeding on re-sprouting leaves found on a spoil heap in Norfolk



ADVISORY

Soil temperatures - we are tracking a number of live soil temperature monitoring locations and soil temperatures have been increasing, many are currently registering above 5°C. However, the large diurnal temperature variation and low night temperatures this week, have resulted in some soils cooling at 5-10cm depth. Germination of seed will start at 3°C but will be slow below 5°C. We recommend that you take some soil temperature measurements at 5-10cm depth to see where your soil temperatures are. There may be field-specific variation, depending on soil type, aspect and topography.

Bolting - early drilled crops are at a greater risk of bolting and it is advised to wait for warmer temperatures before drilling, especially in areas where soils will remain colder for longer such as the Fen peats and Lincolnshire Wolds.

Remember that bolting is triggered by accumulated low temperatures, and not by specific low temperature events. This applies from the start of germination through to June. Measures of the number of vernalisation days and/or hours below a specific temperature are used to predict both the likelihood of bolting and the number of bolters. However, whatever measure is used, the current weather, especially low night temperatures, is resulting in an increasing number of higher risk hours and days. Depending on temperatures over the next few weeks this may be critical to triggering bolting and the number of bolters as the season progresses.

Early drilled varieties – where drilling ensure you use a variety which is at lower risk of bolting and are not listed on the 2019 Recommended List as unsuitable for drilling before mid March. Varieties listed as **not suitable** for drilling before mid March are: Sabatina KWS, Salamanca KWS, Hornet, Springbok, BTS1140, Cantona KWS, BTS 860, Degas and Philina KWS.

Check-list for drill set-up and calibration

Before drilling, Take the opportunity to calibrate the drill and tractor. Pay particular attention to:

- Forward speed and spacing settings
- Steering systems
- Row shut off

Wheels and Weights – Drilling and cultivation

- Remove any unnecessary weight
- Reduce ground pressure where possible (including tyre pressure)
- Select appropriate tractor size for the task in hand

During drilling, be prepared to check settings as conditions change, this maybe within the same field.

- Regularly check spacing, depth and covering of seed
- Adjust depth, pressure and forward speed depending on seed bed quality
- Press wheels and seed firmers can be used to improve seed-to-soil contact: take care not to disturb seed placement.

Virus risk - The 2019 Virus Yellows forecast will be issued next week and this will include the impact of the mild temperatures we have experienced. Despite some frosts, aphids have been able to over-winter. Many aphids are being found in crops such as oilseed rape or volunteer brassicas. From previous experience, any crops grown near to winter OSR can be at higher risk of aphid colonisation.

Ensure any cover crops are fully destroyed ahead of drilling sugar beet, especially where brassicas species have been grown. It is vital to remove sources of plant material which may already be infected, providing sites for infection and spread.

Check spoil heaps and any beet piles left on farm for leaf growth and destroy (or deliver). Check for groundkeepers and target herbicide programmes to control these.



Photo: Spoil heap in Norfolk

Plant Clinic

Please send samples to: BBRO, Plant Clinic, Innovation Centre, Norwich Research Park, Colney, Norwich. Norfolk. NR4 7GJ. Alternatively, email your query with photos to: plantclinic@bbro.co.uk



EVENTS

BeetTech19

For those of you that missed or would like a reminder of the BeetTech19 events please see <https://bbro.co.uk/our-news/2019/beettech19/> for the presentations and audio.

Summer Open Days

Tuesday 2nd July Fotheringhay, Peterborough. PE8 5HZ

Thursday 4th July Thelveton Estate, Diss. IP21 4HP

Book now:

<https://bbro.co.uk/events/>



BASIS POINTS

Two BASIS points in total (not per bulletin) have been allocated for the period between 01/06/18 and 31/05/19 reference CP/67099/1819/g. To claim these points please email michele@basis-reg.co.uk

Two NRoSO points in total (not per bulletin) have been allocated between 01/06/2018 and 31/05/2019 reference NO465447f. To claim these points please email NRoSOC PD@cityandguilds.com