



## IN BRIEF

- **With more settled and warmer weather allowing soils to dry this week, it should be possible to make progress/start with drilling.**
- **However, please check that soil is sufficiently dry enough at depth to travel on without causing damage. Remember this may change when moving between fields and different soil types.**
- **Remember, part of the approach to decrease the impact of virus yellows this season is to ensure plants reach the 12-leaf stage as quickly as possible. Precision drilling into good seedbeds is key to achieving this. Follow the check list provided.**
- **Ensure enough nitrogen is applied at drilling to drive the early phase of canopy development.**
- **Keep up-to-date on sugar beet technical information by checking out the new 2019 BBRO Reference Book online at the BBRO website.**



## ADVISORY

**Soil conditions** – most soils are now averaging above 5°C and typically 6-8°C with a diurnal range of 5-11°C. These temperatures are conducive for drilling and germination to occur and the main high risk period for bolting has now passed.

However, it is important to check that the soil is dry enough at depth before final cultivations and drilling are undertaken. Check soil to a spade's depth for moisture and be patient if it is still too wet. A poor seedbed can reduce plant population, canopy development and therefore yield. Differences in soils types, aspect and topography will all influence the rate of drying.



Photo: Differences in dryness across three sandy clay loam fields on the same Norfolk farm this week.

**Plant population and seed rate** – the target number of established plants is 100,000/ha. One unit of seed contains 100,000 seeds. However, remember to match your seed rate to what you expect the percentage establishment will be. Typically, this is between 70 & 80% and drilling at 1.25 units/ha will allow to establish the target population. Plant establishment is often lower on headlands and parts of the field where the seed bed is poor. Higher seed rates should be considered in these areas.

Tables giving the within-row spacing for different seed rates on 45 and 50 cm rows are available in the latest 2019 BBRO Reference book now available online

### Drilling checklist

- Give yourself enough time to set up row shut off systems to maximise efficiency.
- Check tyre pressures are set correctly for both cultivations and drilling.
- Avoid unnecessary weight (consider the tractor, weights and fertiliser units).
- Ensure row units behind the tractor wheelings are adjusted accordingly.
- Ensure row depth and pressure are set to place seed into moisture.
- Don't over pressurise row units, with high soil moisture this can cause 'side wall compaction'.



- Target depth at 2-3cm in good conditions. Go deeper into moisture where dry.

- Check that seed is being properly covered (watch intermediate press wheels when damp).
- Check within row spacing regularly.

**Different varieties** - make sure different varieties are labelled in-field as they are sown. This is important as it allows you to identify any establishment issues, as well as assessing for herbicide, aphicide and fungicide application later on in the season. Keep a copy of the blue certification label on each pack of seed so you also have this as a traceability reference.

**Nitrogen** - it is important to make sure there is sufficient nitrogen available to crops, especially to drive early leaf expansion and growth. This requires that **30-40kg/ha** of the fertiliser nitrogen is applied at, or as soon after, drilling as possible with the remainder at full emergence. If you are placing some of the fertiliser at drilling, check regularly that coulters are not blocked and/or have not become dislodged and are delivering the correct amount of fertiliser in the right area. Ideally, placed fertiliser should be 5-10cm to the side and below the seed.

### 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](mailto: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-opinions/our-news/news-2019/beettech19/> for the presentations and audio.

**BBRO and AHDB GreatSoils event** – 14<sup>th</sup> May. Terrington area.  
More details to follow.

**Morley Innovation Event** – 20<sup>th</sup> June. Morley Farms.  
Join BBRO and many others at this event, which will be crammed to the hilt with agricultural innovation and know-how. More details to follow.

### Summer Open Days

Tuesday 2<sup>nd</sup> July Fotheringhay, Peterborough. PE8 5HZ

Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> 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](mailto: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 [NRoSOPD@cityandguilds.com](mailto:NRoSOPD@cityandguilds.com)