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IN BRIEF

- Whilst virus infection levels are stabilised, symptoms have intensified as infected leaves progressively senesce, especially in the current dry conditions. Start your harvest planning by prioritising your lifting according to virus infection levels and canopy vigour.
- Levels of cercospora and rust are increasing rapidly in some crops following the wet end to August and subsequent warm temperatures. Check each crop and each variety separately and carefully for foliar disease progression
- Depending on lift date, it is vital to maximise further yield production by protecting green and healthy canopies with fungicides. Do not let intervals between fungicide applications become too large. Second fungicides should be applied within a 21 -28 days spray interval of the first application. A third fungicide may be warranted in crops likely to be harvested later and where the spray interval of the second spray has elapsed.



ADVISORY

Harvest decisions

As a single rule, the healthiest most consistent crop should be left for later harvest as this will have the greatest yield potential. It will be tempting to leave low population crops to fill out into the autumn or late established crops to catch up, however the gains from crops with optimum plant populations are likely to provide the biggest most consistent yield lift.

There are many unknowns with the interaction of virus, foliar disease, fungicide programmes and autumn growth, but the preference would always be to harvest crops with the most virus and disease before those that remain healthier.

Whilst all your fields may contain virus, infection levels can vary dramatically from field to field and ranking the virus level in each may be the key to completing your harvest schedule and fungicide programmes.

If you have used the Conviso-SMART system, it is important to plan to harvest these crops in good conditions to avoid leaving beet behind. Additionally, careful management of the spoil from these fields is essential to avoid spread around your farm. Plan to keep spoil separate so it can be returned to its field of origin. Increased discipline at this point will keep future stewardship simpler and more effective to manage and prevent any potential seed return and weed beet issues.

Foliar Disease

Now is a critical period to assess individual crops for symptoms of disease, especially if you have not applied a fungicide yet, or deciding to apply your second or a third spray. BBRO data shows that to optimise protection against foliar disease, second fungicides should be applied within a 21 -28 days

spray interval of the first application. By doing so you will improve canopy health which will be key to both maintaining yield production in later harvested crops and providing frost protection.

Where foliar disease pressure is high, and crops are likely to be harvested after Christmas, a third fungicide has been shown to improve yields. 85% of the BYC crops in 2018/19 were harvested after the 1st of November and whilst 70% of these crops received two fungicides, 23% of crops received a third fungicide and this increased yield on average by 9t/ha.

Always follow label recommendations for applying products at the correct growth stage. Ensure water volume recommendations are adhered to and are not cut back. Many products recommend that a higher water volume is used in crops with dense canopies to ensure better penetration and coverage. Make sure to check the harvest interval for specific fungicide product you apply as these can range from 21-36 days.

Know what disease(s) are in your crop to select the best fungicide options. Details on diseases and fungicide options can be found in the 2019 BBRO Reference Book and 2020 Reference Book supplement <https://bbro.co.uk/publications/reference-book/>

Cercospora - Due to the developing nature of this disease, consistent information of varietal susceptibility to cercospora is currently unavailable but differences were observed last season. Please check different varieties carefully for this disease. Key symptoms of initial leaf infection to watch out for: regular circular spots with necrotic, tan-grey centres and reddish-brown borders. If the disease develops unchecked, these spots can coalesce into larger brown necrotic areas on the leaf and yield losses of up to 40% can occur.



Developing cercospora symptoms (left) and more advanced infection (right)

Cercospora leaf spot appears to be an increasing problem in the UK and strains of the fungus are potentially resistant to strobilurin and triazole fungicides. Any concerns with disease control or identification please contact the BBRO plant clinic.

Variety selection

Many of you will be considering your choice of varieties for 2021. Use the link below to give you access to a video run-through of the 2021 RL using the BBRO Variety Demonstration strips at Park Farm Thorney:

<https://youtu.be/Aw9Bj0fz9Uw>

Whilst yield is clearly a key consideration, remember to consider other requirements and traits such as varieties suitable for early drilling, BCN tolerance & AYPR resistance. There are also two CONVISO SMART (ALS herbicide tolerance) varieties on the 2021 RL for those wanting to use this technology.

For crops you may want to leave for later harvesting in 2021/22, remember to consider that a good foliar disease rating and good canopy vigour are key. As a guide to canopy vigour, varieties that produced above average top weight across the BBRO Variety Demonstration strips sites in 2020 included: Daphna, Sabatina KWS, BTS 1915, Kortessa KWS, Sancha KWS, Cantona KWS & Lacewing



EVENTS



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