



Early Summer Pointers

Preparations for harvest are underway and with the recent warm weather crops are starting to mature quickly. Desiccation decisions will have to be made very soon but already thoughts are turning to variety selection and establishing crops for next season.



Particularly variable and weedy oilseed rape crops this year will make it more difficult to get the desiccation timing right. Highly variable establishment from late sowings, the coldest winter for more than a decade and the dry spring have left many OSR crops all over the place in terms of maturity.. At the same time, weed growth has really profited from gappy crops and variable herbicide performance in last autumn's deluge. Variable maturity is the biggest problem—mainly because immature plants take so much longer than normal to ripen – even with desiccation. If you harvest when they're still green they restrict combining speed and efficiency. But if you wait for more backward parts of the field to be ready you risk losing a lot of seed from the more mature areas through shedding.

Under these circumstances, apply glyphosate at the earliest opportunity, using a reliable glyphosate at its perennial weed rate accompanied and delay combining until as much of the field as possible is ready to harvest. Treating different areas at different times may be the best technical option with uneven crops and could be practical in some cases but the huge variation in many fields will rule this out..



The formulation of Roundup Max offers a consistent and rapid action regardless of the weather, water quality or spraying conditions. Used at the perennial weed rate – 2 kg/ha – it will aid the speed of action on more immature waxier oilseed rape plants, and in 200 l/ha of water to maximise coverage and crop penetration. Including Pod-Stik in the mix will give extra protection against seed shedding and will allow combining to wait for the more immature plants to ripen..

Patience will also be a virtue this year. Depending on the weather, the crop should be ready to harvest between 14 and 21 days after spraying.

Thunderbolt is a formulation of glyphosate with a desiccant—pyraflufen ethyl and Activ8 wetting system.. The inclusion of pyraflufen ethyl offers faster activity on weeds particularly broad leaf weeds. Rainfastness is 1 hour on BLWs and grasses. It was previously used in stubbles for pre-drilling weed control but has only recently gained approval for use as a pre-harvest desiccant in oilseed rape. Timing of application is the same as glyphosate—see above. It may be an option where quicker 'burn down' of BLWs is needed

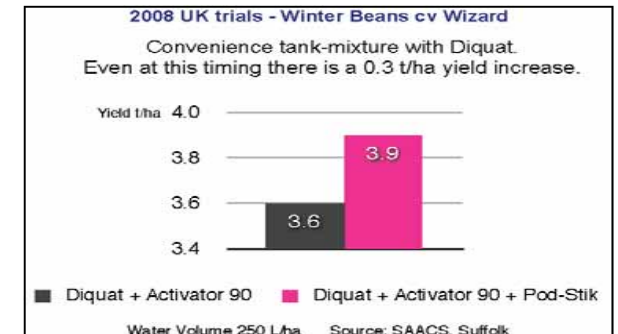
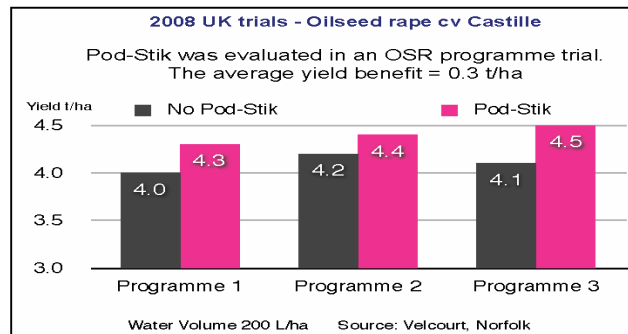


Roundup Desiccation Timing Check

1. Pick a total of 20 pods at random from the middle of the main stem of a plant in the middle of the crop.
2. If at least two thirds of the seeds in at least 15 of the pods show the colour change from green to brown the plant is at its earliest correct stage for spraying. (See picture above)
3. Repeat this process in other areas of the crop to check the assessment applies across the field.
4. If the majority of the crop has reached the correct stage, spray within four days.

If there is any doubt, wait and check again four days later.

Peas & Beans may also need some pre-harvest treatments this year following a difficult season for optimum weed control. Both crops may be treated with glyphosate when average seed moisture is below 30%. In peas the lower and middle pods will be dry & brown and upper pods yellow & wrinkled. In beans the stems are usually green/brown and the pods black. A minimum of 7 days should be allowed before cutting. PodStik is an option in both crops and can be included with glyphosate or diquat where used. Yield benefits are around 0.3 t/ha in both oilseed and pulse crops. Be sure to check that all products used comply with end user protocols.



The future of metaldehyde as a protection against slugs is under threat. If significant reduction of metaldehyde levels in water is not achieved it will be banned. IPU and trifluralin have already been lost and more products will come under scrutiny if pesticide levels in water are not reduced

Be sure to follow the Get Pelletwise guidelines to optimise the efficacy of any applied slug pellets and to avoid metaldehyde entering the water system.

- Slug pellets are pesticides
- Don't spread if you can't spray
- Keep pellets out of ditches and water-courses



TREATMENT GUIDELINES

- Ensure operator is trained
- Use the minimum dose rate required to achieve control
- Apply no more than 700g of metaldehyde / ha / year
- Apply no more than 250g of metaldehyde / ha for a single application
- Calibrate applicator for each different pellet type
- Check spread width. This will be influenced by height of applicator, disc speed, topography, wind speed and direction
- Take advice from a BASIS qualified agronomist

Go to www.getpelletwise.co.uk to get full details of the Get Pelletwise Campaign and all the literature available. The treatment guidelines are summarised in the adjacent box. However, before applying slug pellets, test baiting and crop examination is essential to establish whether an application of pellets is required at all.

If a need to treat is established using good quality pellets will ensure an optimum spread pattern and help to minimise the direct contamination of water courses adjacent to field boundaries

Discuss with your ProCam agronomist the treatment thresholds and what is the appropriate pellet option for your crop



Oilseed Rape Variety Choice

There is always a lot of discussion about the best drilling time for cereals and which varieties of wheat are best suited for early drilling and which are best to be sown later. Not too much thought is often given to the optimum sowing date for oilseed rape varieties.

The 'traffic light' chart below prepared for Dekalb varieties shows that oilseed rape varieties do have preferred drilling slots for optimum yield performance. Green indicates the best drilling period while red timings should be avoided. So, choose your variety according to the planned drilling date and if drilling is likely to be spread over a long period then select different varieties to suit the drilling date range.

All these varieties and others are available for next day delivery from your ProCam agronomist who will be pleased to discuss variety choice and crop establishment.

Variety	Drilling Date					
	Early Aug	Mid Aug	Late Aug	Early Sept	Mid Sept	Late Sept
Castille	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red
DK Cabernet	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Red
DK Catana	Red	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red
Excalibur	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Yellow	Red
Excel	Red	Red	Yellow	Green	Green	Green
DK Secure	Green	Green	Green	Yellow	Red	Red
V141OL	Yellow	Green	Green	Green	Red	Red

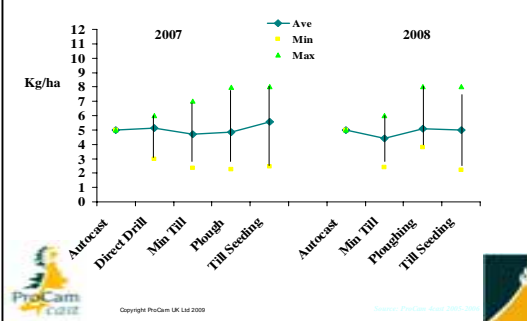


Sluxx is a new option for slug control. It is a formulation of ferric phosphate in a high quality durum pasta pellet.

It has very low mammalian toxicity and is very insoluble in water. So, it is an option where pellets have to be applied in close proximity to water or to crops destined for direct human consumption.

The mode of action is completely different to metaldehyde and methiocarb and similar efficacy is claimed to both these active ingredients. More details are available from your ProCam agronomist.

WOSR – Variation in Seed Rate with Establishment Method Harvest 2007 & 2008



ProCam 4cast data from the last 2 years has shown oilseed rape seed rates to be around 5 kg/ha irrespective of establishment method used. However, thousand seed weight (TSW) varies widely between varieties and between years. A 5 kg/ha seed rate could give vastly different plant populations according to the TSW of the seed lot. This will affect the number of plants established and the final size of the crop canopy. Optimum plant populations are thought to be 50-60 pl/m² for conventional and 30-40 pl/m² for hybrid varieties. Take account of TSW and target populations when calculating your seed requirements. Depending on seed size you could need a lot more or a lot less than you think!