

# More...

Last year our top 25% of producers achieved winter wheat margins £157/ha higher than the average - £492/ha compared with £335/ha. That's 47% more.

They achieved this by producing an extra 1.6 tonnes/ha - 9.9 tonnes/ha as opposed to 8.3 tonnes/ha. That's 19% more.

## ...for Less

And they spent less - £14.49/tonne on sprays as opposed to an average of £17.25/tonne. That's actually 16% less. They also spent 18% less per tonne on fungicides.

If you want to maximise your margins and benefit from the ProCam Group's unique 4cast system, contact any of our regional companies below;

**Robertson Crop Services**  
Tel: 01862 842552

**Fieldcare North Ltd**  
Tel: 01845 537555

**Fieldcare South Ltd**  
Tel: 01777 839000

**BCS Ltd**  
Tel: 01377 240118

**County Crops Ltd**  
Tel: 01704 895888

**ProCam Agriculture**  
Tel: 01763 261592

**ProChem Ltd**  
Tel: 01672 539591

**Chemega Ltd**  
Tel: 01672 539591

**J D Rutherford Ltd**  
Tel: 01273 478860

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[www.procam4cast.co.uk](http://www.procam4cast.co.uk)  
[www.procam.co.uk](http://www.procam.co.uk)

# Has Spring Herbicide use now reached an unsustainable Level?

**Over reliance on Spring herbicides is increasing at alarming rate despite new evidence of their ineffectiveness in certain conditions and major concerns about growing resistance levels, according to the latest statistics from ProCam's 4cast agronomy system.**

Use of ALS inhibitors in Winter Wheat rose to 95% of fields being treated this current growing season compared to 70% last year. More worryingly, applications in March and April more than doubled from 10% to 23% and over the same period, resistance also doubled.

"There is such a high proportion of crops being treated with ALS inhibitors now, every time you use them you are simply selecting for resistance," Dr David Ellerton says.

- **March/April ALS applications double in one year**
- **Overall use up 35% in one year**
- **60% of Atlantis sprays now applied Feb/March**
- **Questionable performance of Atalantis in Spring 2006**

"The problem is compounded by the fact that there is clear evidence that Atlantis (iodosulfuron and mesosulfuron) and other herbicides provided very poor control when they were applied in Spring this year."

The cold wet March, with temperatures half a degree colder than average, virtually stopped crops growing and impaired the products' chemical action, Dr. Ellerton

believes, but the application of sulphonylurea group herbicides also created damage in following crops.

"The bottom line is that Spring applications of herbicides offer poorer control on established weeds and of course it means your crops have been competing with these weeds for far longer than they need have been, so there are yield implications too. They also get in the way of optimum fungicide and PGR application dates.

"4cast shows that this season, over 60% of Atlantis sprays were applied during February and March and I would say this trend has now reached an unsustainable level. We are seeing severe control and resistance problems across the country."

Growers are trying to do too much in the Spring and neglecting Autumn control and cultural control methods.

"The only way to move forward is for producers to target herbicides at the most competitive weeds and maximise their use of cultural and agronomic control methods," Dr Ellerton urges.

"We need to think more about an integrated crop management approach. For example, delaying drilling can allow you to miss the peak blackgrass emergence in the Autumn but you must make the correct varietal choice appropriate to individual field circumstances to avoid a drop in yield."

"Use as wide a range of herbicide groups as possible and include a pre-emergence spray wherever you can. Use pre-drilling and early Autumn herbicide treatments appropriately and use Spring applications only as a last resort."

Autumn 2006  
News Update



Latest news and topical information from the ProCam Group's 4cast agronomy system based on analysis of field results from over one million acres of crops walked in 2006.

For a copy of our new  
'4cast Guide to Profitable OSR'  
please visit [www.procam4cast.co.uk](http://www.procam4cast.co.uk)



# Plan long term Integrated Weed Control Strategies now



**Arable producers must now do more to target herbicides at the most competitive weeds and maximise their use of cultural and agronomic control methods, says ProCam Group Technical Director Dr David Ellerton.**

With serious concerns over growing resistance to herbicides, poor control in certain conditions and complications to fungicide and PGR spray programmes resulting from Spring herbicide applications, growers must adopt integrated crop management (ICM) weed control strategies as a matter of urgency.

Key priorities for next year should include adopting field and season specific policies which can be adapted to changing circumstances and minimising resistance by integrating cultural and chemical controls.

“Cultivation type should be matched to weed species, stale seedbeds should be sprayed off with glyphosate and growers should be prepared to drill later where necessary and use seed rates to utilise crop competition. At all costs, avoid

resistant weeds going to seed,” Dr. Ellerton says.

Product efficacy should be maximised through ensuring the right products are applied in the correct doses in the correct conditions at the correct time, and a wide range of active ingredients with different modes of actions should be utilised.

“Everybody should now be keeping good field records and working with their agronomists to utilise as much information as possible to plan an integrated long-term strategy that will minimise both weed threats and the implications of growing resistance.”

“Crop producers must challenge their agronomists to monitor product performance and assess cost-effectiveness of applications and seek to

identify causes of poor control. If they are not prepared to help with this, change agronomists - there's too much at stake now.

**“Everybody should now be keeping good field records and working with their agronomists to utilise as much information as possible.”**

# Is more OSR the best way forward?



**Recent improvements in off-farm prices for oilseed rape could tempt crop producers to tighten rotations to include more of the crop in the year's ahead, but new financial data from ProCam's 4cast system suggest this may not be the most profitable way forward.**

Based on 4cast yields and costs from 2005 the new price levels would give top 25% producers gross margins of £535/ha for Winter OSR compared with £495/ha for second wheats, and £380/ha and £355/ha respectively, at average performance levels ProCam technical agronomist Nick Myers says.

At top 25% performance levels, a 240 ha arable farm growing a two wheats/oilseed rape rotation would be expected to achieve a total farm gross margin of £163,000 compared with £168,000 for a 50:50 wheat:oilseed rape rotation. At average farm performance, the gross margins would be £135,000 and £137,000 respectively.

“These are not huge gains considering the potential problems that could be encountered when going for these tighter rotations. One reason is that the gap in margins between first and second wheats has closed in recent years.

Growers considering growing more winter oilseed rape should consider the availability of combining, drying and storage facilities, the ability to establish crops on time,

crop management issues such as sprayer capacity and the implications in terms of pests and diseases.

“There is considerable evidence from here as well as France showing that where rotations include more oilseed rape, the disease threat grows considerably - particularly with regard to stem canker. That could become a real problem here and in areas where there is a high area of other brassicas grown too, club root could become very serious.

Growers should not rush to increase oilseed rape areas, but instead look at the finer details of oilseed rape production to ensure they can maximise yields and quality, Nick Myers says.

“Second wheats are too valuable to overlook, and whilst it's tempting to produce more oilseed rape, the long term implications may well outweigh the short term gains.”

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