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PRESS NEWS

TOP PRODUCERS STRETCH THEIR LEAD

The gap between margins achieved by the top 25% of arable producers and the average is growing at an increasing rate, according to figures just released from ProCam's 4cast agronomy system for arable crops grown in 2005.

Top 25% producers achieved Winter Wheat margins £157/ha higher than average producers in 2005, compared with £120/ha in 2004 and £96/ha in 2003.

Average yields achieved in 2005 stayed roughly the same as 2004 at 8.3 tonnes/ha for First Wheats with the top 25% improving yields slightly from 9.5 tonnes/ha to 9.9 tonnes/ha. Gross margins for the top 25% in First Wheat in 2005 were £492/ha compared with an average £335/ha.

"The top 25% are stretching their lead from both ends," explains ProCam technical agronomist Nick Myers. "They are not just producing higher yields but they are also able to do this with lower variable costs than other producers.

"The top 25% of farmers spend nearly £3/tonne less on sprays than average - £14.49/tonne compared with £17.25/tonne. If you focus on fungicides, the figures are £5.94/tonne for the top 25% compared with an average of £7.21 /tonne."

The figures show there is no one area where the top 25% make significant improvements and that farm size and soil type have only a limited impact on profitability.

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"The largest determinant in maximising margins is management ability," Nick Myers says.

"Correct product choice, using the right dose rates, getting on to crops early, not stretching spray intervals – individually all of these have an impact on margins, combined they make a major difference on farm profitability. The top 25% of producers make incremental improvements across all areas and 4cast suggests they're getting better at it whilst other producers are standing still."

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Notes to Editors

This information was presented at the National ProCam Spring Conference at Tattersalls, Newmarket on Wednesday 15th February 2006.

Digital pictures from the conference are available from liz@proterra.co.uk

4cast is ProCam's predictive agronomy system, utilising field results taken from one million acres of arable land, walked by ProCam's agonomists throughout the UK.