

## Variety Shift Leads to Disease Risk Shift

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The large area of disease susceptible wheat varieties currently in the ground will inevitably lead to a shift in emphasis in the choice of T0 fungicides this year, with rusts being top of the agenda, says Dr. David Ellerton of ProCam.

He has calculated that 48% of wheat in the ground this year has a disease rating of 4 or below for yellow rust and over 60% has a disease rating of 5 or below.

“Anything below a 4 rating is classified as very susceptible,” he says. “Last year the corresponding figures for yellow rust were 9% with a 4 or below rating and 24% with a 5 or below rating, so you can see the significant shift of much more susceptible varieties being planted this year.

“For brown rust, 72% of wheats have a disease rating of 4 or below, with 19% having the very lowest rating of 1 and a further 25% with just a 2 rating. This means that the emphasis at T0 has to be on rusts as the main targets, along with the ever present Septoria.”

It also means that a T0 spray will be significantly more important than last year, when crops were backward and the spring was dry.

“With crops being lush, thick and advanced now, a T0 treatment will be an invaluable insurance spray. The snow will have only delayed disease development, and as soon as conditions are warmer, disease will take off.

“Without a T0 treatment, T1 timing is often compromised, diseases get into the crop, particularly rusts and Septoria, and often there will be a knock-on effect across the whole disease control programme. A well timed T0 treatment also allows more leeway to apply T1 treatments at the right time, leaving you more relaxed and in control!”

Dr. Ellerton advises that T0 sprays are usually applied between GS 25-30, the later part of tillering, normally around mid March, with the T1 spray applied three to four weeks later.

“The protectant fungicides, chlorothalonil (Bravo/Sonar) or mancozeb (Quell Flo) have been useful base treatments at T0, as they both offer good protection against Septoria and anti-resistance benefits. Mancozeb has the edge on rusts, though. But this year with the exceptionally high risk of rusts and the varieties we are growing, a rust-specific triazole should be included. Options include Menara (cyproconazole and propiconazole), Agate (tebuconazole and prochloraz) or SAN 703 (chlorothalonil and cyproconazole).

“Stronger products on Septoria such as epoxiconazole or prothioconazole are probably best saved for use at the later T1 and T2 timings.”

As from this spring, growers can no longer mix any chlorothalonil containing fungicide with any

Atlantis-type herbicide, because of weed control antagonism, Dr. Ellerton warns.

Growers with black-grass to control, should do it first with Atlantis, but not unless conditions are right for this herbicide to work - that is warmer weather, crops and weeds growing. This can then be followed up with T0 immediately afterwards, he says.

“If eyespot is a problem or if growing second wheats, an eyespot-specific component such as prochloraz could be added in at T0 in addition to a stronger eyespot component at T1. Prochloraz will help reduce Fusarium and may reduce the selection pressure on some mutated Septoria strains.

“Similarly if mildew is a problem, add in a mildew-specific such as Talus (proquinazid) which offers protection or Cyflamid (cyflufenamid) which has curative and protectant activity.”

Ends

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