

Vast majority of UK crops fall within new NMax levels, shows ProCam 4cast

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Despite concern about the new Nitrate Vulnerable Zone (NVZ) regulations and NMax levels, ProCam 4cast shows the average Nitrogen use in winter wheat and winter oilseed rape has fallen within the new limits over recent years.

Nick Myers of ProCam Agriculture explains that the NMax is the maximum permissible amount of nitrogen from any source that a crop may receive.

“With the new NVZ regulations reaching 70% of all agricultural land, achieving these levels need to be planned for this coming year,” he says.

The 4cast analysis of Nitrogen usage for first and second wheats for the past nine years shows the average Nitrogen use in first wheats was between 192 to 213 kgs N/hectare. The average use in second wheats was higher, ranging from 202 kgs of Nitrogen /hectare to 222 kgs N/ha.

“In the vast majority of cases, farmers are using Nitrogen within the set NMax level for wheat, which is 220 kgs N/hectare for a 8.5 t/ha crop,” he says.

Nick points out that the NMax applies to the entire crop across the farm, not to each individual field. “So you could plan to use more nitrogen on higher potential/quality crops and reduce rates on the poorer crops or fields and so even out the process over the farm.”

“This may be necessary this year in oilseed rape, with the wide variation in growth stages being seen. According to 4cast database Nitrogen applied to winter oilseed rape in the last three years ranged from 204 kgs N/ha to 225 kgs N/ha. The NMax for a 3.5 t/ha crop is 250 kgs N /ha.

“With many late drilled and backward crops, early nitrogen will be a key tool to encourage crop growth and improve rooting, especially in second wheats, he says.

“This may also be the year to consider using growth regulators in combination with growth promoting products based on phosphites and/or zinc acetate technology to further encourage tillering and root development.”

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