

## Teagasc Notes for the week ending Friday 7 July 2017

### Grassland Weed Control

#### Docks

Best control of docks will be achieved in good growing conditions when docks are actively growing and nutrients are actively being transported to new foliage and roots. If seed stalks are seen on the plant or if the dock has diseased leaves or is under pest attack it is better to cut/top or graze and allow re-growth of the docks before applying chemical. Do not apply chemicals in a period of drought as the chemical will not be taken up by the plant leaves in sufficient quantities. Use the highest water rates on the manufacturer's label for best effects. Allow adequate time between spraying and cutting silage for the herbicide to work.

#### Season Long Dock Control

- Use of herbicides based on aminopyralid, dicamba, triclopyr, fluroxypyr, etc., will give at least season long control (possibly 2-3 years significant reduction in numbers and re-growth of docks) plus a wide range of common grassland weeds.
- Where clover is of consequence Eagle or Prospect may be applied. These products do not harm clover but Prospect may have some effect on the constituent grasses in the sward. These are best applied in good growth conditions and will give season long control. Use highest label rates where rootstocks are well established.

Recent Teagasc trials have shown that longer term (up to 5 years) control of docks can be achieved by applying a suitable herbicide (e.g. Hurler @ 1.5 l/ha or PastorTrio 1.0L/ha) onto small docks shortly after re-seeding. By applying the herbicide at this stage of the docks development, facilitates almost complete elimination of the docks. The trials have also shown that docks that emerge in the following years rarely establish due to competition from the grass – basically the grass (chlorophyll) absorbs sunlight (far infra-red part of spectrum) thus the dock seed does not get the correct light signal to germinate.

#### Herbicides for Dock Control in Established Grassland

Products	Chemical	Rate/ha	Comment
Eagle	Amidosulfuron 75%	40-60 g	Controls both broad leaf and curled docks. No effect on clover. Should not be used in very dry weather. Costs €37 to €56/ha
Prospect	Thifensulfuron-Methyl	15g sachet	Does not affect Clover but may retard grass growth in certain conditions. Allow 7 days after application of Prospect before cutting or grazing. Price €29/ha
Forefront T	Triclopyr Aminopyralid	2.0 L	Apply at rosette stage. Also controls a wide range of weeds incl. thistles, nettles, ragwort etc. €78/ha. Should be applied on grazing ground only.
PastorTrio	Fluroxypyr + Clopyralid + Florasulam	2.0 L	Controls many weeds such as chickweed, fat-hen, mayweeds, buttercups, docks and thistles
DoxstarPro	Triclopyr+ Fluroxypyr	2.0 L	Controls docks and dandelions. Best results from 1.0 L/ha fb 1.0 L/ha. €35/ha
Envy	Fluroxypyr + Florasulam	2.0 L	Additional control over straight fluroxypyr where temperatures fluctuate. Strong on chickweed,
Binder/Hurler & various	Fluroxypyr	2.0 L	Controls Dandelions, Nettles and established Docks. Cost €28+/ha at 2 L rate
Hiload Mircam Hygrass	Dicamba + CMPP-P	1.25 L 5.0 L Hygrass	Controls broadleaf and curled Docks, Chickweed, thistles and Nettles etc. Price range €30 +/-ha
Lupo	2,4-D + MCPA	4.0 L	Controls Ragwort, Rushes, Thistle, Buttercup, Nettle, and a broad range of

			weeds with suppression of broadleaf and curled Docks €30/Ha
Thrust	Dicamba + 2,4-D	3.5L	Includes high rate of Dicamba and 2,4-D. Excellent control of Ragwort, broadleaf and curled Docks and a wide range of weeds incl. Buttercup, Nettle, Thistle etc €42/ha

*Prices exclude VAT and are a guide only. Products containing Mecoprop-p will be re-registered this year and grassland will not be on the labels*

### Other Grassland Weeds

**Ragwort** is poisonous in the green and preserved state and has been responsible for many animal fatalities. Normally animals do not eat ragwort in pastures unless grazing is extremely restricted while research suggests that an animal must consume up to 12 % of the animal's body weight to cause problems. However where ragwort is present within finely chopped silage; animals are forced to eat it causing most fatalities. It becomes more palatable to animals when cut or sprayed, as it releases sugars. Any control strategy should be based on the fact that Ragwort is a biennial (lives for 2 years) and also that just because you killed it with a spray does not mean it cannot harm livestock. Small numbers of ragwort can be effectively pulled or dug up and safely removed. For larger numbers, sprays such as MCPA, 2, 4-D, Dicamba, Thrust and Forefront provide good control but measures must be taken to avoid stock eating any dying or dead ragwort present. Best time to spray ragwort is before the flower stem elongates. Take note that the larger the ragwort the longer it takes for the stems to rot down and not be cut in silage.

**Creeping Thistle** is a perennial plant and grows mainly from an underground stem or rhizome and this makes total control difficult with one spray. Yield losses of up to 15% have been recorded but they cause most damage by preventing animals grazing around them. Frequent topping can reduce the root reserves but will seldom eradicate the problem as root fragments can lay viable and dormant for years. This weed is best sprayed with Thistlex, Forefront, MCPA or 2, 4-D in June before flowering and may need a second treatment later in the season to control any late shooting thistles. In a reseed, both root fragments and seed can cause an explosion of creeping thistles.

**Spear Thistle** only spreads by seed. Each plant lives for 2 years (like ragwort) producing a flatted rosette of leaves in year one and then the familiar 'tree-like' structure in year two. Once controlled in the re-seed, it is rarely a problem in grazed fields except after poaching or other sward damage. Topping is not effective to control the growth in year one of their lifecycle (as the thistles are under the cut level) but can be carried out on the second year growth before seed is set. Chemical control options are the same as for Creeping Thistle.

**Perennial nettle** tends to grow in clumps in pasture and can prevent grazing. The growth pattern of this weed makes it an ideal target for spot treatment with one of the dicamba/triclopyr/Fluroxypyr/aminopyralid based products. If the clumps are small and not too dense some of the dicamba /CMPP based products will also contain them if sprayed on a regular basis. High water volumes (400 l/ha) are essential when spot treating. Treat before seed production for best effects