



Teagasc Crops Better Farm

June Diary

Wexford

“The most common topic of conversation down here in South Wexford is rain or rather, up until last weekend, the lack of it” said George Williamson.

“Generally our crops are looking well, especially the winter crops but they all need moisture to convert this potential into grain in the combine” added George. “Winter barley and winter oats appear to be coping with the moisture stress better than winter wheat and spring barley where some leaf curling is evident” commented George.

Winter wheats received its final fungicide last weekend. Crops are very clean with only specks of septoria coming through to the third last leaf. “Its been amazing the differences between the septoria levels on the early and late sown wheat through the year. We thought the disease may have been very difficult to get on top of but the silver lining of all this dry weather is that it stopped septoria in its tracks” said George. He also added that low levels of mildew were evident in the wheats about three weeks ago but it has remained at low levels in comparison to some neighbouring crops where mildew levels have exploded especially in varieties like Cordial and Kingdom. The final fungicide applied to the wheat was Gleam 1.75 L/ha plus Fezan (Tebuconazole) 0.5L/ha plus Dimethoate 0.75L/ha. “After a good look of the crop before spraying aphid numbers were not excessive but sufficient to warrant the inclusion of an aphicide” said George.

Spring Barley is starting to head out on the Williamsons farm and its their intention to apply the final fungicide next week. “Disease levels are low in our crops following the dry spell but the crops are also very short and thinner than we would like” said George. Cultivation systems used before sowing has had a direct effect on the type of spring barley crop the Williamsons have this June. Crops are superior in density, colour and overall yield potential where the seed bed was pressed and one passed in comparison to crops where the seed bed cultivation comprised of a light cultivation then a one pass. “The results of this years establishment, although it is an exceptional year, has prompted us to look at our cultivation system and we will be making improvements for next year” said George. The final fungicide on spring barley will be Siltra 0.5-0.6 L/ha plus Bravo 1.0 L/ha

Meath

The O’Donoghues crops, like all growers in their catchment, are in need of some moisture to fulfil their excellent potential. Soil moisture deficit figures from Dublin Airport (close to where the O’Donoghues farm) are at 60 mm. Met Eireann describe a soil moisture deficit between 50-75 mm as “increasingly restricting growth”. Speaking to Joe late last week, he said they had between 15 and 20 mm of rain but was very hopeful that the weekend gone by would bring another 25-30 mm. “Its very dry here in the north east. I

have listened intently to weather reports over the past few weeks but the rain rarely appears to get this far across the country” said Joe. “It’s in years and conditions like this where heavy land pays off. It may be difficult to work into a seed bed but its moisture holding capacity is incredible” said Joe. “Almost all our winter crops are healthy and there is only an odd area here and there which is showing curled leaves and is suffering from moisture stress. To be fair the weather over the past week has helped to slow growth and give plants a chance. If the weather over the past week was warm and dry then we would probably be looking at very different harvest prospects” added Joe.

The silver lining to all the dry weather is there is almost no wet weather diseases present in crops. “Our wheat crops are very clean despite getting delayed applying the T2 fungicide. The final fungicide wont be applied for another few days and our hope is to get close to the 20th of June” said Joe. The O’Donoghues intend using Prosaro or similar this year. “Its increasingly frustrating in the market place to buy the chemistry needed” said Joe. “Market segmentation is not helping the competitiveness of the farmer especially where the product you need is only stocked by one merchant in your area” added Joe. “If I cannot get a premixed product then I am happy to get generic products and do the job myself” he added. Aphid haven’t appeared in any great numbers as yet on the O’Donoghue farm but the local Teagasc advisor Shay Phelan says that aphid numbers have increased in many crops in the area.

Cork

I spoke to a frustrated John Crowley as he sat in the tractor looking for an opportunity to apply the final fungicide to winter wheats over last weekend. “Its been a difficult May and June to get good spraying conditions with constant wind and showers” said John. The Crowleys have used any reasonable spraying conditions morning or evening and are reasonably up to date with all applications.

The final fungicide is been applied to the Crowleys winter wheat crops even though crops are only at the very early flowering stage. Septoria has not moved past the third last leaf and generally crops can be described as clean. Prosaro 0.9-1.0 L/ha is been applied on its own and with Amistar Opti 1.0 L/ha to half the wheats. “ I used Prosaro with and without Amistar last year and I didn’t see much difference in either colour or yield between either combination” said John. Although he admits there may have been small differences but it wasn’t overly obvious from the combine. After a good inspection of the crops John found few aphids and is not including an aphicide routinely.

The Crowleys completed the fungicide applications on the spring barleys with Proline 0.5 L/ha plus Amistar Opti 1.25 L/ha. “Spring barleys have huge yield potential this year. Tillers survived extremely well in our crops and are very thick and look like they might lodge. I resisted the temptation to apply a late growth regulator to the spring barleys but I think weather needs to be kind to us to get to harvest without any lodging” said John.

On a related note John noticed a field of winter barley which appears to be affected by the spring growth regulator and is thinner than other crops but he also pointed out a mitigating factor may be that the field is in tillage for the last 30 years and may be a little hungrier than others.