

Step 2: Monitoring

At this stage in the process growers have selected their crop and done everything prior to that to reduce the risk from pests as much as possible. Growers now need to be able to monitor the crop in order to ensure issues do not arise and if they do that they can be managed on time. The crop also needs to be monitored to ensure that optimum growth is occurring and that the crop is on target for achieving its potential.

Teagasc currently carries out monitoring of winter wheat and winter barley crops throughout the growing season. This information can assist growers in how they should approach managing their own crops and also allows them to benchmark their crops performance. Monitor crop information is available at:

Winter barley: <https://www.teagasc.ie/crops/crops/cereal-crops/winter-cereals/monitor-barley/>

Winter wheat: <https://www.teagasc.ie/crops/crops/cereal-crops/winter-cereals/monitor-wheat/>

Further information is also available throughout the season from your local Teagasc advisor along with regular updates on Twitter: <https://twitter.com/teagascrops?lang=en> (@TeagascCrops) and Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/TeagascTillage/> (@TeagascTillage).

Growers should now be aware of their risk status going forward based on steps taken to prevent and suppress pests along with the chosen variety and end-market requirements.

In order to successfully monitor crops growers need to walk their crops on a regular basis equipped with the right tools including notepad and pen (for taking notes during walking which can be used for decision making), hand lens (for identifying key pests including aphids and diseases), knife (for dissecting plants to accurately identify leaf emergence), hoop for plant counts, other tools which can be useful include a wide range of field walking guides and phone applications which can help growers to identify common pests. It is important that if issues are present that they are accurately diagnosed and non-chemical solutions are considered as the first line of defence.

Some growers rely on external support (agronomist) to assist during this phase. It is important that the source of advice is considered carefully. It is in the grower's interest to use independent sources of advice and growers are encouraged to work alongside their independent agronomist to ensure advice received is understood and satisfactory. Growers should keep up to date with advances in IPM as much as possible as the system can adapt and change over time with new developments continuously emerging.

Growers should keep up to date with local conditions and developments through their local agronomist or through a local discussion group. Other useful information sources to assist in monitoring the crop include weather forecasting. There is a wide range of useful information and predictions available at: http://www.met.ie/agri-environment/agri_agri.asp