

TILLAGE

July 2017

Grass weeds in cereals



Sterile brome.

Grass weeds are an increasing problem for tillage farmers in Ireland. Traditionally, wild oats and annual meadow grass were the key weeds to worry about. However, brome, canary grass and, increasingly, black grass are possibly more of a problem now. Chemical control cannot be

relied on as the solution, as we are seeing an increasing level of resistance to our main herbicide groups. In fact, chemical control should be seen as the last resort after exhausting all other cultural control methods.

July is the perfect month to assess the level of grass weeds on

Edited by
Ciaran Collins,
Tillage Specialist

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Wild oats.

your farm and to put a control plan in place. Walk all fields prior to harvest and identify the weeds present and note their location in the field. Write this down or draw it onto an Area Aid map or you will forget. When grass weeds are headed out it makes identification easier, but if you are not sure contact Teagasc or any agronomist for help. Hand roguing can be done if the population is low. Desiccate larger areas if seeds have not already been set in the head. Good machinery hygiene is the most critical factor in stopping the spread of grass weeds across your farm. Most grass weed problems start inside the gate, where the contaminated machine starts working. Always take time to clean down your machine following working in a field with a grass weed problem. While this is a chore and takes up valuable time during a busy harvest, it could save thousands of euro, and later man hours in controlling grass weeds in the future. Finally, draw up a control plan. The control plan will have many elements to it but it will be largely based on cultural control. This may involve autumn cultivations, rotation, sowing dates, crop choice, and primary cultivation method.



Black grass.



Canary grass.

Pre-harvest glyphosate

Recent changes to the registration of glyphosate mean that pre-harvest glyphosate is now only allowed for weed control in cereals.

There are no changes to its use as a desiccant for oilseed rape. Crops destined for seed or malting should not be treated with glyphosate.

Grain

Applying pre-harvest glyphosate to a crop will give effective long-term control of scutch, thistles, perennial sow thistle, etc., (**Table 1**). The best results are achieved when the weeds are actively growing in moist soils.

Leaving glyphosate application until after the harvest is not as effective on these perennial weeds.

Applying pre-harvest glyphosate also has implications as regards cross compliance, as these fields should have a green cover (sown crop or natural regeneration) established within six weeks of application.

Is my crop ready for glyphosate?

From 14 days before normal harvest date, collect 20 grains from the centre of several ears. Press your thumbnail firmly into the grain and if the indentation holds on all the grains, the crop is ready for spraying (at or below 30% moisture content to avoid a yield penalty).

Target weeds must be green, actively growing and accessible to the spray. A minimum of five to six hours drying after application is essential for satisfactory results, with all glyphosate products containing tallow amine surfactant formulation.

Table 1: Rates of glyphosate (360g/L) pre harvest.

Weeds	L/ha
Annual grasses	1.0
Annual broadleaved weeds	1.5
Scutch 0-25 shoots/m ²	2.0
Scutch 26-75 shoots/m ²	3.0
Scutch 76+ shoots/m ²	4.0
Volunteer potatoes and other perennial weeds	4.0

Oilseed rape

Glyphosate should be applied when at least two-thirds of the seeds are turning from green to brown in the middle of the main stem.

Harvest takes place two to three weeks later. It is advisable to generally use a high rate of glyphosate when burning off the crop (e.g., Roundup Biactive 4.0L/ha) and especially when targeting perennial weeds. Use 200-250L/ha of water to get good coverage of the crop.



Desiccate oilseed rape when at least two-thirds of the seeds per pod have changed from green to brown.

Maize

Eyespot in maize has been increasing in recent years, especially along the south coast. Wet weather in July and August causes it to establish early and can cause leaf losses soon after tasselling, thus reducing yields. Experience from recent years suggests that where maize is grown continuously and where eyespot symptoms are seen in July, a fungicide application is justified.

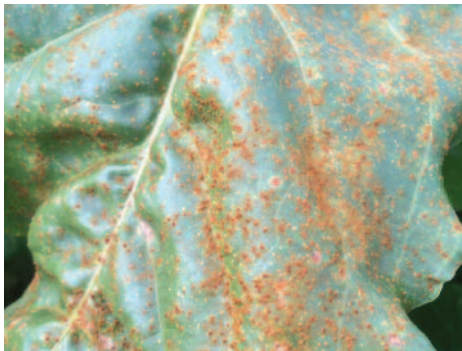
Opera and Quilt Xcel are cleared for use on maize crops and offer protection from eyespot. Consider rotation and early spring ploughing to reduce symptoms for future years.

Zinc and magnesium deficiencies should also be corrected with foliar applications if symptoms are seen.

Beet

Crops intended for later harvesting should receive a fungicide to prevent leaf diseases, especially rust.

Products include Corbel, Furlong, Opera, etc. Also use the opportunity to top up on boron, if a sufficient amount has not already been applied.



Treat fodder beet for disease as soon as you discover it.



HEALTH & SAFETY

Keep children safe

July is a high risk month for childhood accidents, as children are often playing outdoors. Examine your farm for childhood hazards and remove them. Children should not be present when dangerous work is in progress. Most importantly, discuss farm safety issues with children and young persons. Show a good example, as this is vital for positive attitude formation towards safety. Provide a safe play area for young children.



Provide a safe play area for children.