

MEDIA VERSION NO. 1 | March 5th 2018

Teagasc Specialist TILLAGE CROPS REPORT

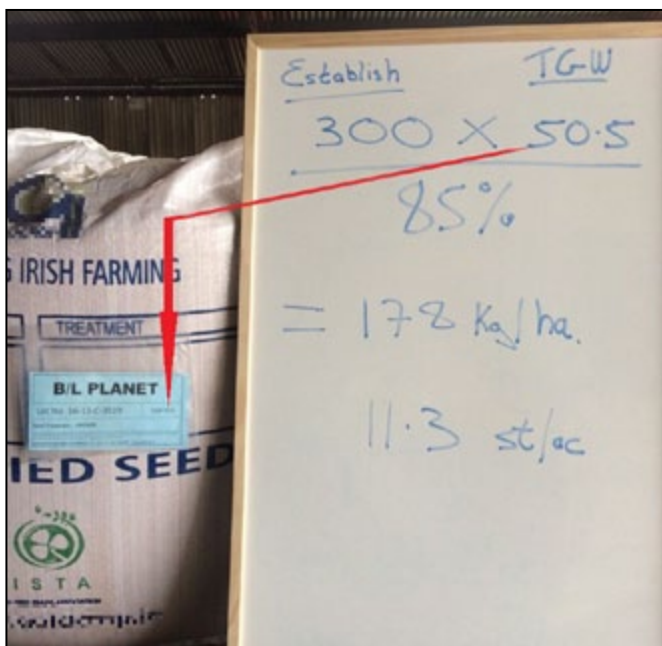


Headlines

- The total area of tillage crops (cereals, oilseed rape, peas, beans & maize) has decreased by 14% since 2012. A further decline is expected in 2018. The current estimates for 2018 winter crops are: wheat (55,000 ha); barley (57,000 ha); oats (11,000 ha) & rape (7,000 ha).
- There are large variations in crop growth stages this year due to some late planting. Advanced barley is at gs 23-25; wheat at gs 22-23 while oat crops are at gs 22. Many crops were not sprayed for weeds last autumn due to wet weather and this is now a priority. Early sown winter barley will be receiving its base fertiliser (P and K) with some nitrogen in the coming days.
- There is still some straw to be cleared from fields before spring ploughing can commence. Patience is advised before ploughing as history has taught us that working land before it has fully dried out will have implications for following crops.
- The Basic Payment Scheme (BPS) is open for applications. The major change for 2018 is that beans no longer qualify for Ecological Focus Area (EFA). Some farmers did not get their planned cropping done last autumn and this may have implications for the '3 crop rule', so make an appointment with your advisor before you start sowing this spring.
- All information is provided as a guideline only. The definitive information is on the product label which should be read and adhered to before using or recommending products.

Produced by the Crops Knowledge Transfer Department, Teagasc, Oak Park, Carlow

Photos of the Moment



Use thousand grain weights to accurately calculate seed rates in spring cereals.



Many late sown wheat crops have had significant damage from pests and weather effects. Assess plant numbers to decide the spring strategy.



Nutritional deficiencies such as nitrogen and manganese (Above) are common in winter barley.



Light Leaf Spot is the biggest threat to oilseed rape this year. Control using a fungicide from mid February onwards for best control.

Crop Nutrition & Fertilisers

New Nitrates Directive S1 605, 2017

A new nitrates directive was signed into law in late December 2017 and is available at: agriculture.gov.ie/nitrates



Winter Wheat

Due to the difficult back end the area of winter wheat planted is estimated to be down slightly at approximately 55,000 ha in 2018, down from the 59,896 ha planted in 2017. Most crops established well and are tillering (gs 22 to gs 24) with normal disease levels for the time of year however some later planted crops have variable establishment rates. Signs of slug and crow damage are common.



Winter Barley

The area of winter barley has dropped by an estimated 13% for 2018 due to a combination of difficult weather last October and disappointing yields in 2017. There are large variations in plant counts this year. Early sown crops have good plant counts but some late October / early November crops are a bit behind. Most advanced crops are at mid / late tillering. Due to the difficult weather last autumn many crops have not been sprayed for weeds and advanced crops will need their first nitrogen in the next two weeks. Disease levels are low.



Winter Oats

Winter oats area is estimated at 9,000 ha in 2018 – significantly below previous years. Crops have generally overwintered well with good plant stands. Oats are not as advanced as other years due to later planting and cooler weather over winter. Disease levels are low. Crops are between gs 21- 23.



Winter Oil Seed Rape

Winter oilseed crops are variable this year. August sown crops on high fertility sites are excellent with GAI's of 1.5 -2.0. Many of the later sown crops are from GAI 0.5-1.0 and will need their first nitrogen immediately. Some pigeon damage has been reported lately on backward crops. Light leaf spot levels are very high in un sprayed crops but can also be found in crops that received an autumn fungicide at lower levels. Light leaf spot is the biggest threat to crop performance and fungicide application is an immediate priority.



Beans

The area of spring beans increased again in 2017 to 11,500 hectares. This area combined with winter beans and other proteins means that the ceiling of 12,000 hectares was exceeded. (DAFM: Protein Crops Scheme). This resulted in a reduction in the protein payment in 2017 to €15 from a potential €50/ha. Spring bean average yields in 2017 were 6.7 t/ha (5.0 – 8.0 t/ha) but late harvesting caused difficulties for some growers. Drill spring beans up to mid-March for top yields but watch sowing depth and crow damage.



Spring Cereals

A slight reduction in the area of spring cereals is expected again in 2018. Growers are advised to complete a crop budget before sowing spring cereals in 2018. Use three year averages for yields as the record yields in spring barley achieved in 2017 may not be repeated. Place realistic values of grain and straw prices.



Greening Update

There are a number of significant changes to the Ecological Focus Area (EFA) rules this year. All applicants who are required to comply with greening have to make the application through the Department of Agriculture on-line system. The Basic Payment scheme (approx. 70% of the total payment) and Greening (approx. 30% of the total payment) go hand in hand again this year. Both of these schemes are mandatory to ensure full payment.



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