

MEDIA VERSION NO. 8 | September 27th 2018

# Teagasc Specialist TILLAGE CROPS REPORT



## Headlines

- Planting of winter cereals has started in many areas into excellent seedbeds. An increased area of winter cereals are expected this year following the decreases last year and the late planting of spring crops
- Early application of herbicides (pre-emergence or early post-emergence) is essential for effective weed control particularly annual meadow grass in barley.
- Soil Sampling should be a priority for farmers this autumn. As a result of the dry summer ground conditions are good so now is a good time to identify fields that have a lime requirement and plan lime applications over the coming months.
- There is a substantial increase in the area of catch crops planted this autumn for farmers own use and in response to demand from the livestock sector. Careful management will be required over the coming months to ensure crops are removed/grazed in good time and that soils are not damaged while these crops are being removed.
- Recent rainfall should help growers when using diquat based products in desiccation of potato crops. 2018 is likely to be the last year that diquat will be available.

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

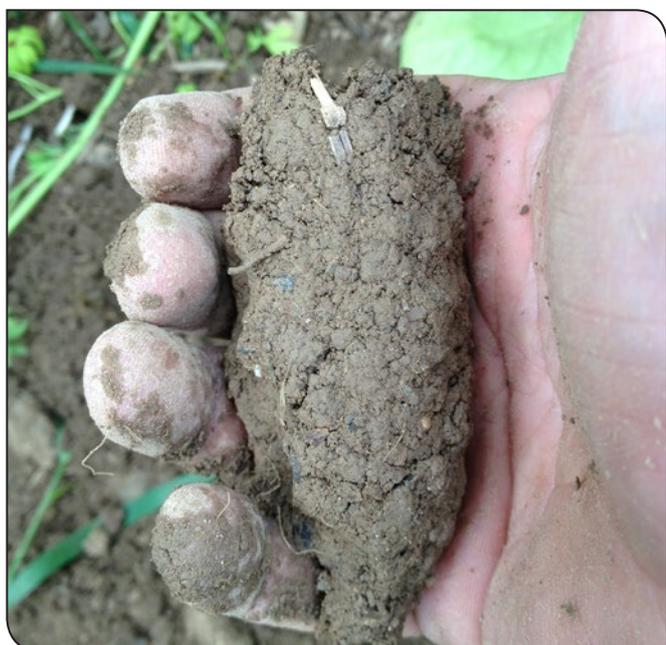
## Photos of the Moment



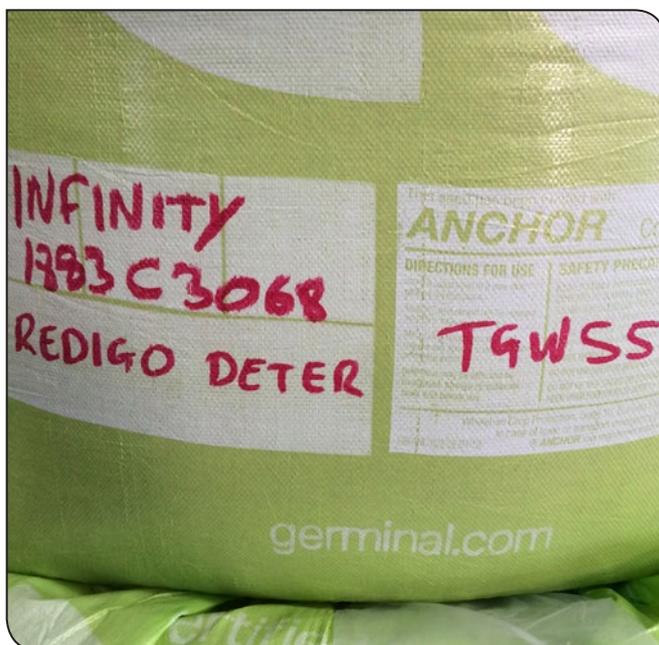
Now is a good time to apply lime to correct soil acidity and maintain soil pH 6.5 for optimum use of P & K fertilisers



Pre-emergence herbicide applications will give best control of annual meadow grass. Post-emergence applications should be applied by GS 12.



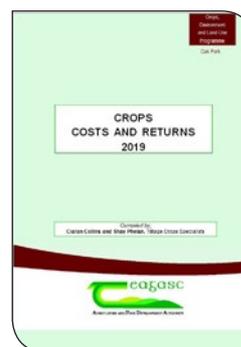
Check moisture levels before desiccating potato crops to ensure no damage to tubers when using diquat



Check the seed TGW before you plant to ensure correct planting rate.

## Crop margins 2019

Grain markets are currently above the five year average but are unlikely to reach 2012 levels due to the downward pressure maize is exerting on the market. Straw is now making a substantial contribution to cereal margins and this is expected to continue in the short to medium term and this is reflected in the provisional Teagasc crop margins for 2019.



## Autumn Soil Management

The recent dry soil conditions will be favourable for soil structure improvements with the extremes of shrinking soils. In addition there should be some nitrogen (N) mineralisation especially on the heavier soils. Now is a good time to complete a number of soil related tasks from soil sampling, autumn application of P on low fertility soils to examining soil structure.



## Winter Cereals

Lessons from recent seasons are that having a spread of crops and a spread of varieties within those crops is important to reduce risk. Disease ratings of varieties is a critical selection criteria due to the reduced efficacy of fungicides in controlling septoria in wheat and the potential loss of active ingredients in 2019.



## Seed Testing

Certified seed offers growers high germination capacity, purity of sample, free of weed seeds within tolerance levels and is treated against seed borne diseases. Where seed is to be home-saved then it is important it is tested for germination, Microdochium (Fusarium) seedling blight, etc. to ensure that it is suitable for use as seed.



## Cereal Weed Control

Timing is crucial to achieve successful weed control in autumn sown cereals especially in the case of grass weeds. There has been a gradual increase in the occurrence of grass weeds in recent seasons particularly brome grasses.



## Potatoes

Most crops are still struggling due to the drought and late season. Many crops have yet to be desiccated which will result in a later than normal harvest and this may lead to increased losses and disorders.



## Winter Oil Seed Rape

Crops have established well despite dry seed beds and there are few reports of cabbage stem flea beetle damage. Weed control is now the priority where pre-emergence herbicides were not used.



## Catch Crops/Cover Crops

There is a substantial increase in the area of catch crops planted this autumn. This increase has occurred as a result of the fodder scarcity and has been facilitated by the earlier than normal finish to the harvest. Tillage farmers need to ensure that best practices are employed to ensure that soils are not damaged while these crops are being removed over the winter.



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