



### SEED

The recent wet weather has delayed all field activity for the time being and little if any earlies have been planted at this stage. All the work at the moment is confined to yard work such as sprouting seed and treating seed. Although there is still some 2019 crop in the ground it seems unlikely that there will be a shortage of crop this season, therefore when planning acreage to be planted don't bank on extra area being required. All fields should be allocated at this stage and seed requirements calculated, avoid taking land at the last minute as this can often lead to more problems than it's worth.

Thankfully Brexit hasn't impacted seed availability for the coming season and most growers have located seed, even though some of

the processing varieties have proven a little trickier to get. On arrival after checking seed for disorders etc. also check the seed for evenness of size. Where there is a large variation in seed size e.g. 20mm consider grading them into 5-10mm size fractions. This will help to give a more even flow at planting time and also help with accuracy.

When treating seed good coverage is essential in order to get the full benefit from each chosen product. Ensure that the seed is clean with no open eyes before treatment, to avoid the risk of damage to the chits, which can lead to uneven emergence. Table 1 shows the approved seed treatments for 2020 and the diseases that they control. You should also remember that good rotations are also very useful in controlling disease.

Table 1; Seed treatments for potatoes

Name	Amistar	Allstar	Fungazil/Gavel	Maxim	Rhino	Emesto Prime
Active ingredient	Azoxystrobin	Fluxapyroxad	Imazalil	Fludioxonil	Flutolanil	Penflufen
Concentration	250g/L	300g/L	100g/L	100g/L	460g/L	20g/kg
Rate per tonne	3L/ha	0.8L/ha	0.1- 0.15L	0.25L	0.2L	1.0kg
Latest Timing	In furrow	In furrow	Before chitting	Before chitting	Before chitting	At Planting
Diseases;						
Rhizoctonia	***	***		***	***	***
Silver scurf			***	**		**
Black Dot	***					
Skin Spot			***			

Disease rating; Good Control \*\*\*  
Some control \*\*  
Poor/no control \*

Table 2 below shows the effect of increasing the number of years between crops on the levels of infection. Work carried by the British Potato Council (Nolan, Firman, & Allen, 2000) clearly shows that a gap of 6 or more years between crops has a significant effect in reducing the levels of infection.

Table 2: Rotation effect on disease levels

Years	No. of stocks	Sil. scurf	Black scurf	Com. scab	Pow. scab
		<b>% Disease</b>			
4	17	12	0.4	3	0.8
5 - 6	18	9	0.5	4	0.6
6 +	11	4	0.1	5	0.1

Common scab appears to be the only disease where rotation had little or no effect.

## WIREWORM

Wireworm incidences again seemed to be common in 2019 with the usual losses associated. The demand for "ley" ground has often resulted in growers taking land that can be risky from a wireworm point of view. The wireworm grubs are the larvae of the click beetle that lives in permanent pasture. Eggs are laid in May and the worms emerge in June and July. It can take 4-5 years for wireworms to mature so if present they should be in the soil at all times during the year. Peak feeding times are in spring and early autumn. While there are no guarantees with grassland when it comes to wireworm there are a few guidelines that

growers may follow in order to try to reduce the risk:

1. Get the field history.
2. Avoid years 1-3 after ploughing grassland.
3. Place potatoes or carrots into the ground before ploughing and inspect for damage.
4. While there are treatments available (Table 2) results are often variable mainly due to the application method and placing of the product.

Table 2; Approved nematicides 2019

Product	Rate/ha Kg/ha	Incorporation Depth (cms)
Nemathorin 10G	20	10-15
Mocap 15G*	40	10-15

Mocap 15G last date of use March 21<sup>st</sup> 2020

## Up-coming events

The National Potato Conference takes place on **Tuesday 18<sup>th</sup> of February** at 10.00am in the Red Cow Hotel, Dublin. The theme of the conference this year is "Potatoes the food of the future". The morning session will look at the markets and the new EU potato promotion, while the afternoon session will look at some the technical issues facing growers for more information check out [www.teagasc.ie/events](http://www.teagasc.ie/events).

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