

TILLAGE

October 2024

Autumn planting

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Check for signs of soil compaction.

2024 was another wet season, which will cause soil compaction problems. All growers should dig a few holes around your fields to assess the amount of damage in the previous two years, especially if you are in reduced cultivation systems. Last year, we could see areas of fields that performed poorly as a result of compaction. Before any crop is sown, this will give you a good idea of what the soil is like underneath. As we head later into October the opportunities to rectify the problem will reduce but now, provided the soil is dry enough, there may well be options. Be aware however that as soils get wetter, running something like a subsoiler through the ground can do more harm than good. At the recent Teagasc Tillage Crops Forum, Teagasc Soils Specialist Veronica Nyhan demonstrated how to assess soils and identify compaction issues. Veronica has also produced a video showing



**IN WINTER
WHEAT**

45%

**OF THE SEED
AVAILABLE FOR
WINTER
SOWING WILL
BE THE VARIETY
GRAHAM.**

how it is done, available at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cKh1o_nM-ls.



Variety choice

Winter barley had a poor year in 2024 and at harvest time many growers were questioning whether to stick with it. It does have a lot of advantages in terms of spreading the workload. One advantage is that there is plenty of choice between two-row, six-row and six-row hybrids. All have their own advantages and disadvantages. When deciding on a variety, yield is often the deciding factor, but straw strength and the disease resistance profile can often add hidden costs that can be more important

than the yield rating. KWS Tardis will again be the most popular variety and has a good overall package. Cassia is now only used for quality markets, such as toasting, as the yield has slipped relative to other varieties. Barley yellow dwarf virus (BYDV) was an issue but this year there are three varieties which have some tolerance in KWS Joyau, Molly and Orcade. Integral is a conventional six-row with good straw strength, while the six-row hybrids Belfry, SY Armadillo, and SY Canyon are all high yielding and can be sown at lower seed rates.

In winter wheat, the choice of varieties is very limited, with just six. Graham (45%) will make up most of the available seed this year. Dawsum had a mixed year in 2024 and it is very susceptible to septoria. Spearhead and Torp are the other two fully recommended varieties, but Spearhead has an issue with sprouting, while Torp can get both yellow rust

Table 1: Seed rates for wheat and barley.

Planting date	October week 1		October week 2		October week 3		October week 4	
	Barley	Wheat	Barley	Wheat	Barley	Wheat	Barley	Wheat
Target plants m ²	280	250	290	260	300	270	310	280
Sowing seeds m ²	350	313	387	347	400	360	443	400
Percentage establishment	80%		75%		75%		70%	
TGW	Seed rate kg/ha							
45	158	141	174	156	180	163	199	181
46	161	144	178	159	184	166	204	184
47	165	147	182	163	188	169	208	188
48	168	150	186	166	192	173	213	192
49	172	153	189	170	196	176	217	196
50	175	156	193	173	200	180	221	200
51	179	159	197	177	204	184	226	204
52	182	163	201	180	208	187	230	208
53	186	166	205	184	212	191	235	212
54	189	169	209	187	216	194	239	216
55	193	172	213	191	220	198	244	220

To convert kg/ha to stones/ac – multiply kg/ha by 0.064.

and fusarium. Champion and Fitzroy are the two provisionally recommended varieties, and while Champion has relatively poor straw characteristics, only 2% of the seed available is Fitzroy.

In oats, Enya makes the recommended list this year along with Isabel and Husky. Enya has a similar yield to Husky and similar mildew resistance to both Isabel and Husky; however, it has a slightly lower score for lodging.

Seed rates

Soils are much drier this year thanks to the recent dry September, so drilling conditions should be somewhat better than last year.

Seed quality is also somewhat better. Thousand grain weight (TGW) will differ from batch to batch and this



Calculate seed rate for each variety.

can have a significant effect on seeding rate. Every year, Teagasc produces a seed rate table based on variety and the TGW for that year, which can be very different from figures quoted in the recommended lists. **Table 1** gives a good indication of the desired seed rate for wheat and barley, but not hybrid barley or oats.

Autumn weed control

Pre-emergence herbicides have been shown to be more effective in controlling many problem grass weeds, such as bromes, blackgrass and annual meadow grass. There are plenty of options, so pick a mix that will control the main weeds in each field. It is unlikely that the same mix will cover all weeds in all fields, so knowledge of the predominant weeds is vital for pre-emergence herbicides to work efficiently. If in doubt, ask your Teagasc advisor about what weeds the different herbicides give best control of and base your programme off this.

Control options

Products such as pendimethalin (various), prosulfocarb (Defy/Roxy), and flufenacet (Firebird/Navigate, etc.) give best results when applied early, especially where annual meadow grass is a problem, while chlorotoluron (Tower) can be used early post

emergence. Add in diflufenican (Stride/Diflanil, etc.) to improve the control of charlock, chickweed and speedwells. Firebird Met will help to control groundsel, as well as many other broadleaf and grass weeds. There have been new reports of blackgrass. Many of these fields will have break crops, but some will be drilled with wheat or barley. Avadex Factor (tri-allate) will improve control of blackgrass and Italian ryegrass as part of a strategy with flufenacet. Do not use it alone – it will require a follow-up, possibly of flufenacet or in wheat, Pacific Plus or Monolith (provided that it is not resistant). Zypar will improve control of fumitory, poppy and volunteer beans. Many of the active ingredients will appear in mixes, so choose products that will control as many of your weeds as possible. Target the most problematic weeds first and the less important ones can be tidied up later.

Winter oilseed rape

Given the delayed harvest, chances to drill oilseed rape were more limited this year.

Slug damage doesn't seem to be much of an issue, but be alert, especially if you drilled in September. If there are any signs of grazing, apply slug pellets as soon as possible.

Volunteer cereals and some grass weeds seem to be growing well and are competing with some crops.

If they haven't already been treated, any of the approved graminicides, e.g., Falcon, Fusilade Max, can be applied now at three-quarters to a full rate, depending on the weed issue.

Fungicide

Phoma will be the main target of autumn fungicide applications; however, varieties

differ in their susceptibility, so follow the threshold guidelines for control (10% of plants affected).

Don't forget that this fungicide timing needs to be effective against phoma and light leaf spot (LLS). The choice of fungicide will often come down to whether or not the crop needs a growth regulator effect or not.

Backward or thin crops will not need a growth regulator, so an application of a half-rate prothioconazole (Proline) should be adequate.

In early-sown crops where a regulator is probably needed, options include metconazole-based products (Sirena, Plexeo) or tebuconazole-based products (Prosaro, Jade, Pontoon, Protendo), again at half the recommended rates.

Grant for PTO shaft covers



Reminder – the National Farm Safety Measure 2024 provides a financial contribution for up to four PTO shaft covers. Closing date for applications is November 1. For further information talk to your advisor or go to: www.gov.ie/farmsafety.

Apply for a PTO shaft cover grant now.

HEALTH AND SAFETY