Drummonds
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NEWSLETTER | MAY 2024

May Agronomy Update

NEWS

- €100/ha (€40/ac) payment for crops that are harvested in 2024. Crops must be declared on Basic Income Support for Sustainability (BISS) application to be eligible.
- BISS applications must be completed by 15th May.

Winter Barley

While it's still early for Ramularia, this disease can often follow stress in crops. If crops are under stress, make sure to include seaweed products and Folpet chemistry in the T2 mix. Folpet has been seen to enhance the activity of azoles against Ramularia. The T2 application should be applied at the paint brush stage (awns peeping).

Managing weeds, especially wild oats, is essential to reduce competition. Use products like Axial Pro at strong rates to help prevent resistance in wild oat populations. Adjust your treatment strategies based on the crop's yield potential and reduce fertiliser and chemical rates for less viable plant counts.

Molly Winter Barley at Drummonds Trial site

Winter Wheat

At this point, it's critical to apply the main nitrogen split to stimulate early growth before introducing strong tank mixes. Herbicides can still be applied to crops that haven't been treated yet. For fields with chickweed, it's crucial to use Fluroxypr-based products, as chickweed has developed resistance to many sulfonyl urea herbicides.


Yellow Rust on Winter Wheat

High levels of Septoria are being reported in the north east, likely due to recent heavy rainfall. This highlights the imminent importance of a well-planned T1 spray targeting Leaf 3. To ensure timely fungicide applications on your farm, it's advised to dissect plants with a sharp knife to identify the growth stages. Accurate timing of each fungicide treatment is vital to ensure maximum efficacy. As Leaf 3 contributes approximately 10% of the overall yield, protecting this leaf as it emerges is essential for securing yield potential and preparing for the flag leaf spray (T2).

Regular monitoring of yellow rust is crucial, and incorporating Tebuconazole treatments where rust is detected is advised due to the rust's rapid spread potential. Eyespot, which has been observed across the north east, damages the wheat's stem and reduces nutrient transport to the ear, further emphasising the need for timely disease management.

Winter Oats

Oat crops are progressing well, with many now past the Growth Stage 32 and ready for their initial fungicide (T1) and growth regulation treatments. If Mildew is present, it's essential to use preventative measures. Products like Talius are effective in controlling and preventing further outbreaks. Oats also benefit from additional manganese, so consider including manganese and other trace elements in your T1 mixture. As temperatures rise, be on the lookout for Crown Rust, which tends to affect crops under warmer conditions. Also, pay close attention to weather patterns when applying growth regulators to oats to minimize stress on the crops.


Crown Rust in Oats

Oilseed Rape

Oilseed rape crops are currently in early to mid-flowering. At this stage, they should have already received growth regulators and their first fungicide round. An end-of-flowering spray is crucial for managing Sclerotinia. Varieties like PT303, which have genetic resistance to Sclerotinia, may not need this treatment. However, Dekalb and Clearfield varieties, which lack this resistance, should be treated accordingly. Consider adding magnesium to the mix when applying Sheperd to target Sclerotinia.

The final nitrogen is now due for crops that were somewhat backward, otherwise nitrogen applications are nearing completion. Foliar nitrogen is a suitable option at this point allowing you to optimise yield and green leaf retention. Oilseed rape requires 40-50kg/ha N to maximise yield after flowering. Incorporate a foliar nitrogen with the T2 flowering spray.

Pollen Beetle in Oilseed Rape plant

Spring Crops

Very few spring cereals have been sown so far, as the land is only now beginning to dry out. Most spring cereals, predominantly barley, are expected to be sown in late April and early May, though seed availability is limited. Considering the demand for wholecrop silage, spring wheat could be a viable alternative.

For spring beans, avoid deep sowing from now on. With all crops likely to be sown simultaneously, any issues with birds should be well diluted. It's crucial to get the crops above ground as soon as possible. However, do not delay applying pre-emergence herbicides.

As fieldwork begins, adjust seed rates upwards to account for the shorter growing season, aiming for 325 seeds/m^2 for late April planting.

To maximise field efficiency when weather permits, incorporate compound fertiliser into the seedbed. Fertiliser recommendations will vary based on crop and soil analysis. Incorporating a higher proportion of nitrogen in the seedbed could prove beneficial if dry conditions follow sowing, although there's a risk of nitrogen loss if it's followed by heavy rain.

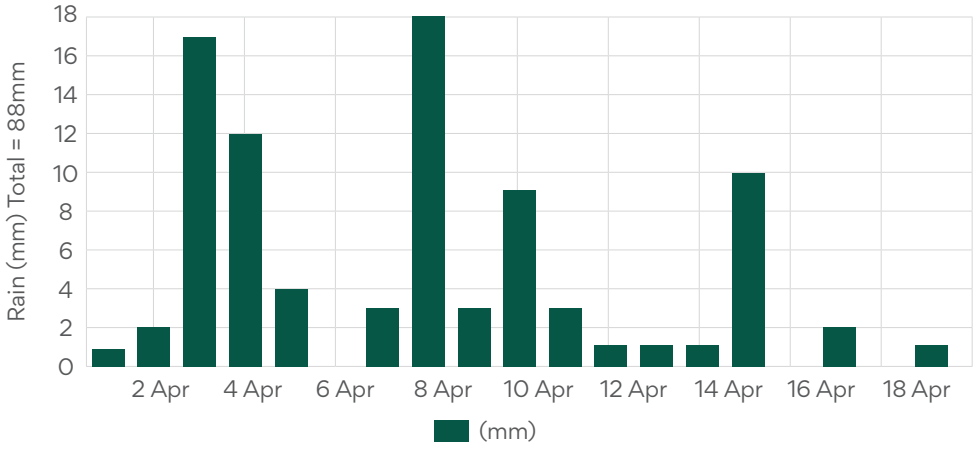
While waiting for improved ground conditions, use this time effectively

- Inspect fields thoroughly, plan the sequence of fieldwork, and identify unworkable areas.
- Ensure all machinery is in good condition, replacing any worn parts now to avoid mid-season breakdowns.
- Calibrate sowers and fertiliser spreaders for all products being used.
- Maintain communication with peers for both moral and practical support.
- Consider your BISS application and consult your advisor, especially if considering headland fallow or other alternative strategies.
- Note any issues with drainage, headlands, or gateways and plan for corrective measures later in the year.

Rainfall

We recently installed a weather station at our trial site. This clever unit monitors rainfall as well as soil moisture and soil temperature as well as wind speed and relative humidity. The unit has its own power supply and is topped up by solar panel. All the data is stored on the cloud, pardon the pun! Below is a graph of rainfall and soil moisture below. During April so far we have recorded 88 mm of rainfall which has left soils saturated and cold Hopefully we will see a change in the weather pattern soon to allow some field operations to be completed.

Drummonds weather station



Planning for the First Cut

Quality must not be compromised over quantity as first cut silages get underway. Regular monitoring of silage swards is just as important as monitoring a grazing sward. The digestibility or Dry Matter Digestibility (DMD) of silage is largely influenced by the growth stage at which the grass is cut and ensiled.

Cutting height will also influence sward regrowth. By raising the cutting height, grass plants are not forced to utilise energy reserves to produce a new leaf, this also reduces the interval between silage cuts. Avoiding clamp contamination from the outset is crucial. Pastures that have been rutted should be rolled to minimise the introduction of soil to the clamp. Excessive soil within the clamp encourages clostridial development and increases the risk of poor silage fermentation.

Where swards are allowed to go to seed before harvest, the digestibility of the silage will be compromised. Like most other plants, grass goes through a vegetative stage and then a reproductive stage, at which point lignin content increases. To ensure reproduction is a success, the grass begins to incorporate lignin into its tissue which helps keep the seed head upright. This lignin is indigestible to ruminants and can reduce the DMD of grass silage significantly. Research has also shown that crude protein (CP, 160 vs 109g/kg DM), water soluble carbohydrates (WSC, 133 vs 107g/kg DM) and metabolisable energy (ME, 11.9 vs 10.5MJ/kg DM) content decline as the grass matures. This may prove very costly as nutritional losses will need to be buffered with concentrates.

Tedding out as soon as possible after mowing is recommended as dry matter levels are increased. This process also minimises the proliferation of undesirable bacteria and moulds within the swath.

It is crucial for lactic acid producing bacteria (LAB) to dominate within the clamp in order for a good fermentation to take place. These bacteria utilise the grasses natural soluble sugars and excrete lactic acid, reducing the pH of the clamp to 4.

Cutting in the middle of the day when sugar levels peak is advisable. Inoculants may also be used to increase the amount of lactic acid producing bacteria within the clamp. Grassland will utilise 2.5 kg N/ha/day (equivalent to 2 units of N/acre/day) under ideal growing conditions. Nitrogen acts as a buffer within the clamp and can have a negative impact during the fermentation process, so nitrogen supply is particularly critical. Too much will affect fermentation; too little and yields and crude protein content could be poor.

Correct management is key to ensuring a quality silage. It is important that producers focus on the quality of the end product and not just on getting value for money from the contractor by producing a bulky, stemmy crop.

Bale Wrapping Tips

Storing of wrapping film

- Try and keep the film in its original packaging until you need to use it, (ideally in shady place).
- Avoid taking out of the box for as long as possible (until you need to use it).
- Don't leave the rolls on the wrapper.

Before wrapping

- Follow the manufacturer's instructions for the maintenance of the wrapping machine.
- Ensure the pre-stretching system height is correct, line up the centre of the roll with the centre of the bale.
- Clean the wrapping machine, particularly pre-stretch rollers of tack (glue deposits).

Wrapping

- Wrapping should be done (ideally) within 2 hours of baling.
- Don't wrap during the hottest part of the day.
- The glue face of the film must be in contact with the forage.
- Wrap the bales at the stack.
- For dry forage material (50%DM +) use a minimum of 6 layers.
- Avoid using different colour films.
- Don't leave any opened rolls on the machine - return back to its box and store in a shady place.

Storage

- Move the bales from the field as quickly as possible.
- Handle the bales as little as possible.
- Store the bales upright, with a maximum 3 layers high.
- Store bales closely to where they will be used, on prepared flat suface.
- Check the bales regularly; seal any bales of holes and scratches.
- Ensure they are protected from birds and rodents.

Maize

Maize stands out as a highly productive forage crop, offering excellent high quality livestock feed at competitive prices and is straightforward to grow with correct site selection. It also offers farms an avenue for additional revenue as a feed source for livestock. As a break crop, maize can boost yields of subsequent cereal crops, thus benefiting crop rotations.

Maize Varieties suitable for planting in the open

- Saxon
- Scandinav
- Ambition

Maize Varieties for planting under plastic

- Saxon
- Starlord
- Scandinav
- Lg 31207

As Maize requires warm moist seedbed, it is best advised to wait until soil conditions are suitable for sowing to ensure good crop establishment. Sow when soil temperatures are 10°C or above.

Seed Rate will be approximately 100,000 seed per ha using a precision seeder. Fertiliser requirement is based on soil index so ensure you have an up to date soil test to apply the correct NPK balance for good crop growth.

Recommended List of Uncovered Forage Maize Varieties 2024

This Recommended List details varieties that are suitable for uncovered forage maize systems and should not be used as a basis to select varieties suitable for growing in covered systems.

Actual data is shown for the mean of the control varieties, and the relative data (as % of controls) is shown for all varieties with the exception of ME. The data is based on results of uncovered trials carried out over the period 2021 to 2023.

		Recommended		Provisionally Recommended		
	Controls*	Ambition (R)	Prospect (R)	Resolute (PR-2)	KWS Anastasio (PR-1)	Saxon (PR-1)
Dry matter yield (t/ha)	19.0	101	102	106	109	107
Starch content (%)	27.2	98	101	88	92	92
ME (MJ/kg)	-	11.4	11.4	11.3	11.3	11.3
Dry matter content (%)	42.4	100	99	93	91	100
Earliness of maturity	-	Medium	Medium	Medium-Late	Late	Medium
Year first recommended	-	2015	2023	2023	2024	2024

*The control varieties were Ambition, Glory and KWS Exelon in 2021, and Ambition and Prospect in 2022 and 2023

Weed Control

It is well known that maize is a poor competitor against weeds so ensure good weed control strategy is important. The application of pre emergence herbicides of Wing P, Stomp Aqua combined with a soil surfactant will give good levels of control. There may well be a follow up post emergence spray to tackle some late emerging weeds and possibly grass weed control. Continue to monitor for pests post emergence and crop establishment.

May Offers

Ends 31st May 2024

ONLY €102 inc. VAT

Kingspan 90 Gallon Plastic Water Trough + FREE Philmac Hydro Pipe Connector

ONLY €52 inc. VAT

Platinum/Titan 12 Gallon Plastic Water Trough + FREE Philmac Hydro Pipe Connector

ONLY €138 inc. VAT

Dooleys Concrete 40 Gallon Trough

ONLY €690 inc. VAT

Dooleys Concrete 500 Gallon Trough

ONLY €229 inc. VAT

Hydro Piping 1 ¼" Normal Gauge 150m Roll

ONLY €55 inc. VAT

3ft Estate 2 Life Sheep Wire 635/6 50yd Roll

ONLY €11 EACH inc. VAT

All Life Imported UC4 Treated Brown Round Posts 6ft 4"

ONLY €23 inc. VAT

Miracle Cream 500ml

ONLY €19.80 inc. VAT

Foran Kentucky Karron Oil 4.5L + FREE Copper-max Syringe

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