

Downpatrick Monitor Farm

Meeting title: IPM and what we can learn from organic farming

Date: 12 November 2019

Speakers: David Sandford (Arable Farmer & NI Chair NFFN)



Farm Update

- Harvest 2019 – an above average year for yields
- Autumn drilling has been hard as it has been so wet (and tiredness can have quite an impact!)
- Drill try out was in the ground for 10 months and was harvested on 20 August 2019:

Horsch disc drill 3.907 Ton/ac	Clayton drill 4.162 Ton/ac	Combination drill 4.578 Ton/ac	4.216 Ton/ac
6" cultivation Horsch disc drill 4.778 Ton/ac	6" cultivation Clayton drill 4.411 Ton/ac	6" cultivation Combination drill 4.533 Ton/ac	4.574 Ton/ac
Plough Horsch disc drill 4.686 Ton/ac	Plough Clayton drill 4.430 Ton/ac	Plough Combination drill 4.550 Ton/ac	4.555 Ton/ac
4.457 Ton/ac	4.334 Ton/ac	4.554 Ton/ac	



Integrated Pest Management

- What does IPM mean to you?
 - Biodiversity
 - Testing
 - Thresholds
 - Rotation
 - Companion cropping
 - Varieties
- What are the issues?
 - Resistance
 - Slugs – weather / cultivation method / seed beds
 - Wireworm
 - Buffer strips
 - Dealing with combine pressure
 - Using all tools available
 - Risk management
 - Thinking ahead
 - Glyphosate
 - Weather
 - Urea
 - Aphids – later drilling / varieties

What were our IPM questions? Answered by Charlotte Rowley, Crop Protection Scientist (Pests) AHDB

- **BYDV – if we haven't been able to spray this autumn do we now just hold off till January? Is there any point trying to spray before then?**

This depends on the aphid pressure in the crop. The good news is temperatures have dropped so we will likely see few aphids migrating into the crop and much lower reproduction (both can be estimated using the BYDV tool <https://ahdb.org.uk/bydv>). However aphids that are already in the crop could still be moving around and potentially transmitting virus. To give an idea, aphid activity greatly reduces at temperatures below 3°C, and virus inoculation efficiency decreases to 23–25% at temperatures below 6°C. They will, however, only be killed off when temperatures get really low (for grain aphid around -8°C). Late sown crops will be lower risk as they will have had a shorter exposure and once past GS31 most of the risk from new infections is passed. On balance I'd say spraying now would be more beneficial than in January.

- **Why don't we have access to chemicals that are available in Europe?**

Products can only be used in the countries in which they have been authorised for use, so if a new product is available elsewhere but not the UK it will either be because the company hasn't applied for authorisation here or the authorisation has been refused. If it is something that has been withdrawn (e.g. neonics), in EU pesticides law there are derogations to authorise the use of non-approved chemicals in special circumstances and it is down to the individual member state to apply these, overseen by the European Commission.

- **What can we encourage predators, and is there information about ladybirds?**

Generally speaking, the best way is to provide habitat in the form of uncropped areas with a diversity of plants (e.g. beetles like grasses, parasitoid wasps need nectar from flowers, ladybirds like nettles). Reducing insecticide inputs is also important, and keeping cultivations to a minimum where possible will help some species. Information about encouraging natural enemies is available here: [Encyclopaedia of pests and natural enemies](#) (page 172 onwards)

- **Is there something we can use as a companion crop that either slugs or aphids don't like?**

Slugs unfortunately like most things and there haven't been any successful companion crop trials with repellents as far as I know. There has been some work to show that incorporating mustard beforehand reduced slug damage in potatoes. Some people have been trialling drilling wheat into OSR volunteers as the slugs will prefer the brassica crop to the wheat but this needs careful timing to make sure they don't then move onto the wheat and cause damage. Red clover can also do a similar job. With aphids, there is a suggestion that direct drilling and 'hiding' the crop in trash/stubble can help to reduce aphid immigration as they use visual cues when deciding where to land. The debris may also provide habitat for natural enemies.

- **Is there information somewhere about pollinator strips?**

The AHDB Strategic Farm West is looking to measure the impact of environmentally-responsible farming, including the use of cover crops, flower margins and in-field flower strips. More information is available here: [Strategic Farm West](#)

And there are some other useful links here:

<https://www.agricology.co.uk/resources>

<https://www.buglife.org.uk/resources/habitat-management/cereal-field-margins/>

<http://www.cfeonline.org.uk/guidance-and-resources/>

- **Is there management data to help with decision making?**

There are a range of tools available on the AHDB website to provide you information on pest, diseases and weather to aid with decision making – ahdb.org.uk/tools

Further information

- [Encyclopaedia of pests and natural enemies](#)
- [Encyclopaedia of cereal diseases](#)
- [Encyclopaedia of arable weeds](#)
- [FAR focus: Integrated Pest Management \(New Zealand\)](#)
- [Recommended Lists for cereals and oilseeds](#)
- Pest and disease monitoring tools can be found at ahdb.org.uk/tools

Nature Friendly Farming

- We got an update from David Sandford about what he is doing at Portloughan Farm
- David does his best to provide habitats for wildlife including grey partridge, barn owls and insects through the use of hedges, wildflower margins and sterile strips.

Take-home messages

- We need to make sure that the environmental schemes work for farmers
- Farmers should be able to put areas of land into environmental schemes if they are not fit for farming without it costing them
- Carbon capture may play a big part going forwards

AHDB resources

- Understand your business costs with AHDB's benchmarking tool Farmbench at ahdb.org.uk/farmbench
- Monitoring tools are available at ahdb.org.uk/tools
- Sign up to market information and research newsletters at ahdb.org.uk/keeping-in-touch
- Find out what's going on at other Monitor Farms and Strategic Farms at ahdb.org.uk/farm-excellence
- All AHDB events can be found at ahdb.org.uk/events
- For guidance on how Brexit will impact your business, see ahdb.org.uk/brexit

Next Meeting


Cover Crops with Elizabeth Stockdale – 12:30 – 16:00 on Monday 9th December 2019 at Bright Community Centre [Click here to book.](#)

Contact details

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