

Tuber TALK

YOUR AHDB POTATOES UPDATE

AHDB



Autumn 2019

Tomorrow's world

Look to the future at BP2019 as
the sun sets on CIPC and Diquat
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Does maleic hydrazide hold the key to a stable future?

Restrictions for maleic hydrazide (MH) have been removed following a review.

The Chemicals Regulation Division (CRD) of the HSE removed a restriction preventing MH from being used on crops intended for livestock feed. MH is the active substance in growth-regulating products such as Itcan SL270, Crown MH, Fazor and Source II. It is used for the control of volunteers and to suppress sprouting during storage.

The decision will be welcome news to growers and was made after additional data was submitted by an industry stewardship group. AHDB's Sutton Bridge team has recently completed a review of MH as a sprout suppressant.

Popular products containing MH available in the UK:

- Gemini Itcan SL270
MAPP number: 17957
- Certis Crown MH
MAPP number: 18018
- UPL (Arysta) Fazor
- 'Old label' MAPP numbers: 13617
- 'New label' MAPP number: 19074
- Drexel Source II
MAPP number: 17858

Mike Storey, Technical Directorate at AHDB, said: "The CRD has concluded there are no safety concerns for consumers, therefore there is no benefit in imposing the livestock feeding restrictions on products containing maleic hydrazide.

"As well as being an extremely welcome decision, this outcome demonstrates the impact of effective collaboration between

authorisation holders, who worked together with industry to devise a robust stewardship scheme, and to provide the data required.

"Given the timeliness of this amendment, giving growers a chance to apply in the field during the summer, this is excellent news."

The news means that growers and store managers have access to more sprout suppressant options following the EU's decision to withdraw approval for chlorpropham (CIPC). The removal of the restrictions on MH is particularly welcome as the active can be combined with other sprout suppressants to increase its efficacy.

AHDB's Sutton Bridge team is currently researching alternative methods to support growers following CIPC's withdrawal and has recently launched a Storage Network offering one-to-one advice (more information below). The team is also working on producing a ranking system of the dormancy (the period before sprouting begins) of different potato varieties. It is hoped that, with better understanding of this area, growers can make decisions based on enhanced knowledge of individual varieties.

Following the withdrawal of CIPC, the current storage options available to UK growers are:

- Ethylene
- Spearmint oil
- Maleic hydrazide (MH)

There are a number actives which (at time of writing) are not available to UK growers. AHDB recently published information on these sprout suppressants.



Adrian Cunnington
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Stable nature of MH is what's important

The one thing in common between MH and CIPC is that they don't flush out of store easily, which means they give a long period of residual sprouting control. In contrast, all of the direct alternatives to CIPC are much more volatile, which means they're easily lost from store.

"The reality of using volatile chemistry for sprouting control is that they will have to be reapplied more frequently. So if you're carrying out ambient ventilation for CO2 control or are having to flush the store due to a rot problem, then the volatile chemicals aren't going to hang around," explains Adrian Briddon of Sutton Bridge Crop Storage Research.

"Changing from non-volatile CIPC and MH to entirely volatile products, will mean changes to store operation. Using a lot of ambient ventilation will mean more chemical is lost and has to be reapplied. Switching to more refrigeration will certainly reduce chemical costs but whether this will balance the additional electricity isn't clear," he explains.

One-to-one advice available on storage



In July this year, the EU withdrew approval for the use of chlorpropham (CIPC). As the most widely used active in potato storage, the decision means many will need to change their storage strategies in time for its withdrawal.

The good news is that there are still sprout suppressants available, but a more holistic approach will be required combining distinct methods rather than relying on a single active.

To assist in dealing with this change AHDB's Sutton Bridge team is offering one-to-one support via the new Storage Network. The service has been made available by £800,000 of ring-fenced funding for sprout-suppression and storage support.

Free for levy payers, growers and store managers can call the service and receive a site visit from an adviser trained by AHDB storage experts.

Winter storage meeting dates



North West

Storage and seed meeting:
Cheshire
Tuesday 18 February

Agronomists Conference

Leicester
3 & 4 December

West

Storage event:
South West – TBC

BP2019

Harrogate
20 & 21 November

North East

Storage and seed meeting:
North Yorkshire
Thursday 23 January

North Lincs

Storage event:
North Lincolnshire
Tuesday 21 January

East

Storage event:
South East – Kent
Saturday 31 October

Book via:
ahdb.org.uk/events

Adrian Cunnington, Head of Crop Storage Research at AHDB, said: "The Storage Network has been devised to allow agronomists and advisers to act as proxies for AHDB storage experts, allowing people to get one-to-one advice on best practice for their potato stores."

"It's a free consultation that will allow levy payers to get up to speed with their individual storage arrangements, to tackle the issues they will encounter following the loss of CIPC."

"Store managers can call upon the expertise of a range of professionally qualified advisers, supported by our own experts, who will visit businesses to talk through the options, assess stores and provide advice on how to mitigate any impact."

To book a free consultation, levy payers can call the AHDB Storage Network booking desk on **01406 359419**.



Alternatively, you can call the AHDB Storage Advice line for over-the-phone advice on **0800 02 82 111**.

More information on the Storage Network is available via ahdb.org.uk/storage-hub or the June episode of our podcast; subscribe via your normal podcast provider.



BP2019 Harrogate event as important as ever during time of change



Once every two years, the whole of the Potato Industry comes together for this unique 'seed to shopping trolley' event. It's an exceptional networking and business opportunity for all those involved in growing, handling, processing and retailing the crop in our £multi billion industry.

At AHDB, we are proud to be knowledge exchange partners. We've been listening to your views and the challenges you're facing, so our seminar programme is designed to help you as you make plans for the future.

You can also find us on the AHDB stand, where our team will be on hand to demonstrate tools and provide you with information.

BP2019: Factfile

When:

9:00am to 5.30pm
Wednesday 20 November 2019

9:00am to 4:00pm
Thursday 21 November 2019

Where:

Yorkshire Event Centre
Great Yorkshire Showground
Harrogate.

What:

Exhibition, trade and machinery stands; seminars; networking and more.

AHDB tools and resources demonstrated at BP2019:

- Farmbench
- Brexit impact calculator
- Storage hub and storage cost calculator
- NEW variety selection tool
- NEW PCN calculator
- Fight Against Blight
- Potato Data Centre

Previews of selected seminars:

Competing on a level playing field?

Vikki Campbell - Market Specialist Arable
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How do we compare to Europe (1.30pm day one) and The AHDB Production estimate – live! (10.30am day two)

As we leave the EU, clarity over our domestic production, as well as continuing links with EU neighbours, is ever more important. At BP2019, your Market Intelligence team at AHDB will be delivering two seminars to cover both of these areas. The first day we'll be discussing how the UK shapes up against European markets and, on the second day, releasing our 2019 production estimate.

Day 1's session offers a fantastic opportunity to hear from key industry players from both sides of the Channel. As well as highlighting similarities, differences and opportunities in a world post-Brexit, the interactive session will offer audience members a chance to quiz panellists directly.

Day 2's seminar will not only provide the first release of the GB production estimate, but a chance to gain a true understanding of the impact this could have on the industry in the upcoming marketing season. The production estimate, produced via invaluable participation from AHDB Grower Panel members, provides a robust and consistent means of estimating the volume of potatoes produced by GB each season. Don't wait to hear it reported – listen to it live!

So come along and interact with AHDB's market specialists in what promises to be a thought-provoking, insightful and actionable seminar programme.

No diquat, no linuron – what next?

Bill Watts - Knowledge Exchange Manager
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Alternatives to lost chemicals (10:00am day one)

While potato growers are notoriously adaptable – even the most skilful would have been forgiven for scratching their heads this season.

The chemical 'toolbox' at our disposal in 2020, will be quite unrecognisable from that of two years ago, let alone five years ago! We have done our best to try to address some of these challenges through our Strategic Potato (SPot) Farm trials and demonstrations over recent years, and the results of our diquat and linuron replacement work will form a key part of this seminar on day one at BP2019.

Post-diquat, some crops will be relatively easy to desiccate. Where it is possible to select determinate varieties and grow them without excess nitrogen on light land, few problems are expected.

AHDB's two projects in 2019 were designed to help prepare growers for difficult situations:

- Indeterminate varieties
- Heavier land
- Salad crops with precise size requirements

- Seed crops with precise size requirements
- Foliar or tuber disease in the crop
- Wet weather

Most of the trial sites have four replicates and results will be analysed statistically. Results will be available at BP2019.

Two of our SPot hosts, Mike Shapland of James Foscett Farms, Suffolk, and Will Gagg of RJ & AE Godfrey, N Lincs, will provide the grower perspective of how the trials have progressed and they will be joined on stage by agronomist Graham Tomalin and Emma Hamer of the NFU.



BP2019 Seminars

Time	Seminar title	Chair and speakers
DAY ONE – On-farm excellence		
10:00am	No diquat, no linuron – what next? Alternatives to lost chemicals The most effective available alternatives to diquat and other chemicals (recently lost or coming up for renewal soon). Including results from our national haulm destruction field trials	Emma Hamer, NFU Graham Tomalin, Agronomist Mike Shapland, James Foskett Farms Will Gagg, RJ & AE Godfrey Chair: TBC
11:00am	Storage 2020: A look at the potato store of the future What will your store look like next year? A roundup of key issues including post-CIPC cleansing, using natural dormancy and available alternatives	Adrian Cunnington, AHDB Additional speakers TBC Chair: Jonathan Papworth, Fen Edge Farming Ltd. and AHDB Board
1.30pm	Competing on a level playing field? How do we compare with Europe As the changing storage landscape increases the chances of European imports, we take a look at how we compare with growers from the continent	Sara Maslowski, AHDB Vikki Campbell, AHDB Philip Kemp, Mercian 4 speakers from North European Potato Growers
2.30pm	Managing the future of your business: tools and skills for a successful succession Practical tools, tips and information to help you stay on top of the detail and play to your strengths as the industry changes	Russell Price, Russell Price Farm Services Martin Williams, MW Farming Heather Wildman, Saviour Associates Tess Howe, AHDB Chair: Tim Isaac, AHDB
3.30pm	Show me the money: funding and development in the post-subsidy era How will your farm business look when the Brexit transition is over, and where can you find development funds?	David Eudall, AHDB Chris Danks, Innovate UK, Knowledge Transfer Network Chair: Phil Bicknell, AHDB

DAY TWO – What is the potential of our market?		
10.30am	Breaking it down: The AHDB Production estimate – live! How will this year's harvest affect your price? Our MI team will analyse each factor that will affect the market (planted area, yield, varieties, imports/exports, etc.). Don't wait to hear it reported – listen to it live!	David Eudall, AHDB Aidan Wright, AHDB Peter Collier, AHDB Alice Bailey, AHDB
11.30am	Understanding our consumer: how customer knowledge leads to more sales Hear from AHDB's consumer insight and marketing teams about how potatoes sales have risen in the last five years, and how we're planning to help keep markets moving	Zoe Avison, AHDB Stu Baker, AHDB
2.00pm	Millennials and misinformation: Global trends and the implications for carbohydrates Is pseudo-science killing the potato market? A look at global trends and what is driving the modern consumer	Cedric Porter, World Potato Markets Steve Evans, AHDB Rebecca Miah, AHDB

All about chemistry

Everything we learned at Potatoes in Practice 2019



Claire Hodge
Senior Knowledge Exchange
Manager – Scotland

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Over 400 people attended a muddy but, thankfully, sunny Potatoes in Practice where the focus – both in the seminars and the plots – was on loss of chemistry.

Scottish Agronomy's Greg Dawson kicked off the seminar sessions with a look at alternatives to diquat, with a particular focus on the seed sector.

With tolerances so low, especially for pre-basic crops where there is zero tolerance for blackleg and virus up to the 4th generation, one of the major risks in delayed haulm destruction is the possibility for disease to gain a foothold.

"Some of the canopies on these varieties can be very vigorous," Greg said. "We could potentially reduce nitrogen in some cases to let it die back more naturally, but you have to then be very careful in terms of disease risk."

"We know from previous research on high grade seed that rapid haulm destruction reduces fungal disease in the crop."

While flailing also reduces fungal infection, it comes with the risk of regrowth, which, in turn, increases the risk of virus.

Under root cutting, also now under trial, could potentially speed up the rate of haulm desiccation and stop bulking but, as yet, we don't know if it is a practical option for high-grade seed.

Russell Whiteford of Belchim Crop Protection also tackled the subject of desiccation at a workshop held later in the day, a new addition to the event, where he discussed likely options post-diquat. He focused on flail and non-flail options and the difficulties growers may face if flail/spray is not an option.

Out in the field, there was also a number of desiccation-related plots as well as two machinery demos, which were showcasing kit currently available for mechanical destruction.

It wasn't all about chemistry loss, there was also discussion on potato nutrition with Stu Baker from AHDB focusing on how to ensure consumers are clear on just how healthy an option the potato can be.

He highlighted the newly formed Food Advisory Board, which is a key part of AHDB's efforts to counteract misleading media reports into potato nutrition.

Of course, the spectre at every feast these days is Brexit, and while Julian Bell of SAC Consulting outlined the potential risks of a no deal, Louise Sutherland of Red Tractor focused on how changes to the Safe Haven Standards could potentially strengthen the industry, whatever the future holds.

New standards likely to be added to the scheme cover areas such as water use, storage best practice and traceability, and the scheme will cover Brown Rot and Epitrix on top of the existing coverage of Ring Rot and Dickeya.

"These standards have done an excellent job of protecting the industry from key diseases for many years," Louise said. "However, times are changing, we have Brexit and our future trading relationships to consider, as well as climate change and reducing our environmental impact. We believe we have made sensible additions to the current scheme, which will not be onerous for scheme members to abide by."

"The standards are now open for industry consultation, and we hope to gather a wide range of responses from both the seed and ware sectors, before we finalise and launch them in 2020."

Once again, Potatoes in Practice has taken on some of the sector's biggest issues and, no doubt, next year there will be even more to discuss.



Agronomists will meet to future-proof pest management

Agronomist Conference – 3–4 December 2019, Marriott Hotel, Grove Park, Leicester

AHDB has called agronomists to meet and join the development of an integrated strategy to help the industry tackle the increasing challenge of managing pests, weeds and diseases.

The latest research on crops in an arable rotation will be shared at a two-day technical conference in Leicester, from 3–4 December, which will provide a platform for agronomists to hear from scientists, researchers and PhD students to influence the development of a strategy and build relationships with the wider industry.

An integrated approach to pest management (IPM) is becoming increasingly important because of a growing population, changing regulatory environment and increasing resistance to crop protection measures.

Head of AHDB's Arable Knowledge Exchange team Tim Isaac said:

"This year's Agronomists' Conference will provide an opportunity for agronomists and growers to hear about and discuss the latest developments in IPM. It will also be a great networking opportunity for all those involved in the crop sector."

Pressure to find alternative methods to protect crops, has increased following the withdrawal of key actives. The morning sessions of both days of the conference will focus on crop protection.

Potato growers will learn about the latest research on blight, as well as lessons from the continent: Leendert Molendijk from Wageningen University and Graeme Byers from Tayto Group will discuss PCN management in the Netherlands and potential lessons for British growers.

Anne Stone - Knowledge Transfer Manager
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The two-day technical conference will showcase the latest research on Integrated Pest Management and provide agronomists with practical management strategies to use across the rotation.

The conference will showcase the latest research on most of the crops found in an arable rotation, but with a focus on cereals and oilseeds on day one and potatoes on day two. Both days will feature presentations and interactive workshops, together with panel discussions, to provide plenty of opportunity for delegates to question experts, researchers and PhD students.

The afternoon sessions will focus on crop nutrients and resource use. Talks will explore soil health and testing for micronutrients for cereals and oilseeds, as well recommendations on cost-effective phosphate use. Potato growers will learn about organic amendments and soil health. Desiccation, nitrogen and biostimulants will also be explored.

Workshops on both days will cover IPM strategies across cereals, oilseeds, potatoes, sugar beet, field vegetables, peas and beans. The sessions will explore using crop varieties as a foundation of IPM, use of biopesticides, irrigation and the latest research on potato storage options following the loss of CIPC.

The Agronomists' Conference takes place from 3–4 December. For a full programme and how to register, please visit the AHDB event pages – ahdb.org.uk/events/agconf19



NEWS *in brief*

Thank you, we're listening

Over the past three years, many of you have contributed to our Levy Payer Satisfaction Survey, and provided us feedback via other routes. Your views are a vital part of how we set our strategy, chose subjects for research and build our event programme.

So thank you to those who have helped to date.

We're always ready to lend an ear when you have something to say. Your local KE manager is your first port of call if you want to get in touch.

NEW Tuber Treatment Guide

A new publication on tuber treatment focusing on treating seed potatoes is now available. Growers can use the information to assess the risk of soilborne disease and consider which varieties to use for diseases specific to their location. There's also helpful advice for growers to plan a growing strategy to minimise the risk of disease development; consider which treatment to use where risk is greatest and plan how and when treatments are likely to be most effective. You can download a copy via the AHDB website, ahdb.org.uk

New PCN Guide launches at BP2019

A new edition of the **PCN Grower Guide** will be launched at BP2019 in Harrogate this November. You can get your hands on a copy by visiting the AHDB stand.

Biofumigation Guide available

If you're preparing for winter biofumigation, the latest edition of the **AHDB Biofumigation Guide** has all the help and advice you need. Head to the Knowledge Library section at ahdb.org.uk to download a copy.

Industry view: BP2019 is a chance to practice the 'art of the possible'

Mark Taylor – Chair of the Fresh Potato Suppliers Association



BP2019 provides us with a fantastic opportunity to come together, share our successes, challenges, and renew friendships.

The potato industry is resilient and innovative. However, the way we grow our potatoes today is very different from the way they were grown 25 years ago, and the next generation will grow them differently again.

We have a Great British success story to tell and, come what may on the 31 October, our consumers will be able to rely on quality home-grown potatoes.

I will not spend too long dwelling on Brexit in this column, simply because print lead times mean I do not know what political situation we will be in when you read this.

What we do know is that change is coming. But who better to deal with this change than our industry? We have been dealing with change our whole careers, we will continue to do so, and I encourage you all to embrace it.

In the AHDB seminar room at Harrogate, the final seminar on day one will include a Brexit update. I was pleased to see this is a forward-facing topic that encompasses funding and development opportunities. Challenge and change will always bring opportunity. A reminder to us all – 'focus on what you can influence'.

Learning from each other

There are many inspiring people within the industry who I am looking forward to catching up with in Harrogate. They are a range of characters, but most have some specific qualities in common.

They tend to have a good relationship with their customer, take the time to meet with them and ensure there is a mutual understanding of what is needed and what is possible. They are open, and not afraid to compare themselves with others. And they are dynamic and have a mindset for change.

Two such characters are Russell Price and Martin Williams, Herefordshire Farmers, who through the AHDB Monitor Farm programme have spent time reviewing not only what they do, but also why they do it. Their seminar on planning for the future is one not to miss.

Rising to the challenge

Of course, we have challenges ahead. The loss of CIPC and diquat is not what anyone would have chosen, especially happening at the same time.

It is scant consolation, but I know from the time I spend working with European partners, that the way the British industry has managed CIPC and other chemicals through stewardship is held as an example of best practice. Work continues, to ensure the industry navigates its exit in the best possible way. Colleagues at Sutton Bridge remain your first point of contact on advice and latest updates.

The first two seminars of the show will focus on alternatives to these former mainstays of our armoury. We know there is not a like-for-like replacement for either and, in future, we will find ourselves reaching for new varieties, and new techniques as part of a holistic approach.

We cannot spend all our time on the defensive, trying to save doomed chemistry. We must pick our battles, and we will win some – as we did recently with maleic hydrazide (MH). I am sure the recent review of MH as a sprout suppressant conducted by the team at Sutton Bridge Crop Storage Research will form a big part of their seminar at 11:00am on day one.

Working together to understand our customer

The second day in the seminar room has a focus on customers and markets. I hope to see a mix of growers and suppliers in the room because I believe it is vital that we all work together.

More change is coming, not only to agricultural practices but to consumer habits. We will need to work together; understand what pressures each group is under and ensure we are all working to the same end.

We will need to constantly horizon scan, try new things, test the water and refine how we work. AHDB has a role in this, with the consumer and market intelligence services it provides. But we must each take responsibility for our own parts as well – and accept that doing as we have been for the past few years is just not good enough, going forward.

As I said at the start of this column, the potato industry is innovative and resilient. We are used to change and many of the most successful businesses have thrived on it.

BP2019 will be a great chance for us to meet and discuss the latest round of changes and then turn them into a successful future for the British potato sector.

I look forward to seeing you in Harrogate.

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