

Weed Control – Pre-emergence Herbicides



- Pre-emergence herbicides work better when soil moisture is present or rain is expected following application. It is important they are applied to fine, clod-free seedbeds for optimum performance.
- Use of a pre-emergence treatment may provide greater flexibility with post-emergence treatments which can be particularly useful when sprayer capacity is limited. A pre-emergence treatment should also be considered where high levels of grass and/or broad-leaved weeds are expected.
- Decisions on use of a pre-emergence treatment may need to be on a field-by field basis.
- Ethofumesate, metamitron, clomazone and quinmerac are approved for pre-emergence use in sugar beet – please see [Pre-emergence Herbicides Fact File](#) for more information.
- When using ethofumesate, retain some for post-emergence treatments. Generally, rates applied pre-emergence are 1.0 l/ha which applies 500 g ai/ha, half of the amount that is permitted in total to a field in any 3-year period.
- Including metamitron at the pre-emergence timing (usually at 1.0 l/ha to apply 700g ai/ha) and building applied dose through the post-emergence treatments will build the residual activity of this active which will be of benefit in controlling fat-hen.

Virus Yellows (VY) Forecast update 31st March:

New for 2026: We can now issue an in-season update to the virus yellows forecast which was released in early March. The weather conditions of the last month have now been incorporated into the Rothamsted Research Virus Yellows model for 2026 and now predict earlier start dates for the migration of *Myzus persicae* in both regions:

Northern region (Newark factory area) is predicted to begin six days sooner on the 26th of April (initial forecast: 2nd of May).

Eastern region (Bury St Edmunds, Cantley and Wissington factory areas) is now predicted to begin four days sooner on the 18th of April (initial forecast: 22nd of April)

The proportion of crops which could be infected with VY is also estimated to have increased by around 15% in the North and 10% in the East.

BBRO's AphidWatch network will go live during the second week of April to confirm when aphid migration begins. Details of how to stay up to date with the latest findings will be made available in the next bulletin.

Further Information:

Virus Yellows Forecasts: [East & North](#)

Factfiles: [Drilling](#), [Aphicides 2026](#) & [Pre-emergence Herbicides](#)

BBRO [CropWatch](#)

Beet your Best – [Target 2: Drilling](#) & [Target 4: Weed Control](#)

BeetCast:

[Listen to this month's BeetCast](#)

March saw the release of the Virus Yellows forecast. This month's podcast discusses the risk across the growing region.



On-farm activity

Drilling

Drilling is progressing well on light to medium soils, with heavier land requiring more patience to ensure the soil can support machinery weight without creating compaction from cultivations or drilling.

With high winds and sunny days, soil surfaces are drying out quickly between localised rain showers. This should be considered when setting drill depth. Whilst moisture may be present at time of drilling, consider the weather forecast and the soil drying from the surface, going from 3cm to 4-5cm may give protection from the seed drying out.

Nutrition

Easily missed at a busy time, keep an eye on applied nitrogen rates and double check application and calibration when switching products.

Hygiene

Drier weather should now allow remaining hygiene tasks to be carried out on farm:

- Ensure spoil heaps have been returned to field or are being managed properly, either killing off re-growth or covering clamps to limit growth and contain pests.
- Loading sites that previously have been too wet to deal with can be ploughed, this is especially important in high pests or disease pressures areas.
- As spring cereals/crops are being established post sugar beet, please consider management of ground keepers through cultivations or herbicides.



BBRO In-field - May 2026

- 19th May (9:00 or 11:00) - Rauceby, Lincolnshire
- 20th May (9:00 or 11:00) - Morley, Norfolk
- 21st May (9:00) - Linton, Cambs

- Join us for:
- Seasonal crop update
 - Pest pressures, monitoring and management
 - Apicide use, timing and stewardship
 - Weed control performance
 - Opportunity to network with BBRO and fellow growers

BASIS and NRoSO points available

Please click below to book a place

[BOOK HERE](#)

TARGET TWO: DRILLING



Are the drill and operator ready to go? Is maintenance complete?

Consider attending BBRO Drill Training for wider drilling set up discussions



Is your drill set up to match field conditions?

Take into account soil type, crop residue and cultivations to ensure drill design is compatible with these demands



Do you adjust drill depth and pressure to ensure seed is consistently drilled into moisture?

Adjust your drill on a field-by-field, day-by-day basis. Ensure drills are set up to achieve 3-5cm depth. Do not drill deeper than 5cm.



TARGET FOUR: WEEDS



Do you need a pre-emergence herbicide?

Apply pre-emergence herbicides when conditions are optimal but avoid on high OM soils and in very dry years.



Have you got an understanding of the weed spectrum in your sugar beet crop(s)?

Tailor weed control relevant to your farm and weed pressure. Ensure regular applications where necessary to maximise control.



Do you have a plan for adapting your herbicide applications?

Avoid spraying under intense sunlight or when daily temperatures are high. Consider size of crop. Adjust adjuvants based on crop stress.

