

Making the most of later drilled crops starts with variety choice

Agronomy Issues
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In response to a very challenging Autumn in 2019 where many crops were drilled very late or not at all, we have seen a significant amount of early drilled wheat this Autumn, largely in first wheat scenarios with low grass weed pressure. However, the issues that have led us to more delayed drilling have not gone away, and as such, many will continue to adopt this approach this season.

Delayed drilling is often considered from mid-October onwards and we are rapidly approaching that window. However, many wheats can be planted right through to the new year and last season produced evidence of just how resilient winter wheat can be when drilled in extreme scenarios.

Making sure you choose a suitable variety for delayed drilling is critical to ensure yield potential is maintained as much as possible.

Typically, the varieties that perform best when drilled later have high genetic yield potential with good over-winter development and vigour in spring as they move towards stem extension.

Matt Bull, Seeds Technical Specialist, Syngenta

[SY INSITOR](#) and [SHABRAS](#) have the ideal growth habit. Varieties with good tillering potential can compensate effectively which is also why we see [GLEAM](#) being effective in the later slot.

Delayed drilled crops will be in the ground for a shorter period. A plant's tillering potential will be directly correlated with thermal time and as a result, later drilled plants will inevitably tiller less. However, we can effectively compensate for that by increasing the seed rate as appropriate. Our suggested seed rates are below:

Variety	Earliest drilling date	Sept Wk1	Sept Wk2	Sept Wk3	Sept Wk4	Oct Wk1	Oct Wk2	Oct Wk3	Oct Wk4	Nov Wk1	Nov Wk2	Nov Wk3	Nov Wk4	Latest safe drilling
Winter wheat														
GRAHAM	1 st week Sept	275	275	275	300	300	325	325	350	350	375	375	400	End Jan
GLEAM	1 st week Sept	275	275	275	325	325	350	350	350	375	375	375	400	Mid Feb
GALLANT	Mid Sept		275	275	300	300	325	325	350	350	375	375	400	End Jan
SY INSITOR	Mid Sept			275	325	325	350	350	375	375	375	400	400	End Jan
SHABRAS	Mid Sept			275	325	325	350	350	375	375	375	400	400	End Jan
Winter malting barley														
CRAFT	1 st week Sept	275	275	300	300	300	325	325	350	350	375	375	400	End Dec
ELECTRUM	1 st week Sept	275	275	300	300	300	325	325	350	350	375	375	400	End Dec
FLAGON	Mid September		275	300	300	300	300	300	325	325	350	375	400	End Dec
Hybrid barley														
Hyvido	Mid September			200	200	200	200	220	220	250	250			End Oct
Hyvido - black-grass	Mid September			250	250	250	250	275	275	300	300			End Oct

Arguably, seedbed conditions can be a bigger factor than drill date on crop establishment so in later drilled crops, seedbed preparation is key. Seed care can play a part and we have regularly seen crop establishment benefits, alongside root enhancement with [Vibrance Duo](#) and those differences are accentuated in delayed drilling scenarios.

Top picks for different Scenarios

Delayed drilling because of high grassweed pressure?

In this situation a variety that covers the ground well over winter is key. Additionally, getting to stem extension early and having strong vigour in spring will help compete with any grassweeds. SHABRAS fits well here and whilst not the highest yielding wheat, will offer good crop competition reducing weed seed return for the following crop.

Delayed drilling second wheats because of take-all?

Delayed drilling is an excellent decision to help manage take-all risks. There are a number of good

varieties to choose in a second wheat scenario and growers should consider both the AHDB RL late drilled yields and second wheat yields. The two best hard group 4 options that combine both high late drilled yields and good second wheat performance are SY INSITOR and GLEAM.

Delayed drilling following late lifted root crops?

If weather allows for drilling typical winter wheats following root crops then you may need to consider latest safe sowing date. GLEAM has an extremely wide drilling window with a latest safe sowing date of mid-February and is able to compensate for extreme scenarios.