

Growth surge demands strong regulation

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Cereal crops checked by the cold start to spring, are expected to leap forward with the onset of warmer weather and rising soil temperatures. South West Agronomy's, Stephen Harrison, advocates a strong PGR programme now, to help give high yielding plants the strength to stay standing through to harvest.

"Most crops have already had an initial application at GS 30-31 (final leaf four), combined with the prolonged natural growth check in the cold weather," he advised.

"But with the warmer and wet conditions, along with the latent fertility from fertiliser applications, the expected bounce-back and growth potential means we are needing something stronger now," advised Stephen Harrison.

His recommendation for high yielding crops is a mix of Moddus at 0.1 to 0.2 l/ha, in tank mix with a reduced rate of chlormequat. That is most likely to go on in combination with a fungicide at the GS 32 (final leaf three) timing.



“I believe that it really is vital to get the early PGR programme in place at the right time, even if we then follow up with a final application, of ethephon, at GS 37 to 39 on the biggest crops,” said Stephen (above). “Trying to do it all at the final late timing really doesn’t work.”

The aim of the Moddus application now is to shorten basal internodes and overall crop height, as well as strengthening the stem to counteract the leverage of heavy yield ears later in the season. He advocated applications are based on specific crops’ vigour and growth, rather than individual varieties.

He warned that most of the highest yielding modern varieties, such as Evolution, Diego and Lili, for example, are all relatively tall, which are more susceptible to wind blow and lodging.

“We need to give them the best chance to stay standing,” advocated Stephen.

Stephen highlighted that the Moddus/chlormequat combination only counts as one component in a supported three-way tank-mix, which makes it an ideal option for a T1 application with Keystone and Bravo fungicides, for example, to counter the existing high disease pressure (below).



Syngenta Field Technical Manager, James Southgate, added that cereal crops will continue adding to root mass right through to flagleaf emergence, with Moddus applications now further encouraging development.

“Stronger rooting encouraged by Moddus adds anchorage to the standing power of treated crops,” advised James Southgate.

“It also give plants greater resilience against the effects of drought, as well as making them better able to take up available moisture and nutrients.”



James (above) pointed out that treatments can be tailored to potential risks using the [Moddus Variety App](#), now available for growers and agronomists to download and giving up-to-date advice on bespoke PGR programs for all leading wheat varieties. The App uses independent assessment of varietal strengths and weaknesses, calculated by researchers at Harper Adams University College, to indicate recommendations, which can be tailored to individual field situations.

“There is still good opportunity for growers and agronomists to make a significant difference in the crop’s ability to perform this season, and to keep it standing through to harvest,” he added.

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