

Hybrid barley gives clean OSR entry

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Hyvido barley ears at harvest - shading out black-grass competition

Winter barley has now become the standard pre-OSR entry for Chris Baylis to establish around 550 hectares of the crop each season. The earlier harvest gives greater opportunity stubble weed control and another valuable process in the grass weed control programme, along with assuring the optimum timing for OSR drilling.



Furthermore, introducing hybrid barley has given him another tool to compete against black-grass which, although not a serious problem across the whole farm, he's keen to keep in check with a cleaning crop of OSR.

The Lincolnshire estate's 3600 hectares is predominantly in one ring fence, with three satellite units. The area had been divided into 120-hectare cropping blocks, calculated as a day's work for the farm's two combines or drill combinations and half a day for the sprayer.



Each field has been colour coded for the level of black-grass to focus management on the worst scenarios; red fields won't be drilled with wheat before Oct 20, for example, but Chris sees no point in compromising crop performance by delaying drilling in fields where the weed isn't a problem.

"We are also meticulous about cleaning off or washing down machinery when it's moved from the heavier land, where black-grass is more of a burden, onto the cleaner wold fields," he added.

Rotation on the wold land would be a winter wheat; spring barley; winter barley; OSR, along with some sugar beet fitted in, while on the heavier land a more extended rotation now includes winter wheat; winter barley; OSR; winter wheat; spring wheat and spring beans - giving two consecutive spring crops to hit black-grass again.

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