AGRONOMY Spring agronomy

Preserving crop potential

"Given fungicide applications have been timely, growers have set crops up well."

While the kinder spring has been a blessing in many cases, autumn-sown crops aren't home and dry just yet. With cereals showing promise, preserving their potential is now the name of the game. *CPM* explores some of the priorities.

By Janine Adamson

espite the dry spring being muchwelcomed on the whole, as the old adage goes: too much of a good thing...but aside from a little moisture being on wish-lists, what else could be in demand as the season progresses?

Agrii's Tim Horton says following a reasonably poor autumn, crops have enjoyed the spring sunshine and therefore been able to improve their rooting capacity. "It's certainly looking more hopeful now than the past few years, providing there's a little rain where required, situations appear in control."

But with the current heatwave (end of April), his main concern is brown rust, particularly if temperatures continue to soar. "However, given fungicide applications have been timely, growers have set crops up well so it should be a case of maintaining that," he adds. Something which he hadn't anticipated seeing this year in such abundance, is gout fly. "Although it's a pest we observe most seasons, levels in autumn crops were much higher this year, exerting greater damage.

"And while crops are now bouncing back, no doubt helped by the kinder spring, it highlights the dangers associated with earlier drilling – something growers may have risked to ensure they had a crop in the ground before the weather turned."

As is widely acknowledged, there's little that can be done for this season's autumn-sown crops, but Tim reminds there remains hope for spring wheats. "As the next generation evolves, this is the riskiest time for spring wheat. A well-timed pyrethroid spray can provide reasonable control, but timing is critical. "As soon as you can see eggs on the leaf, they must be targeted within seven days," he stresses.

While Tim is optimistic, Somerset-based agronomist Peter Waltham says for his region, it's been another tough season, and as such, there's much crop variability. "Following Harvest 2024, all hopes were pinned on rectifying the poor,



All under control

Agrii's Tim Horton says crops are currently looking more hopeful than during the past few years, and providing there's a little rain where required, situations appear in control.

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THINKING OF TOMORROW



AGRONOMY Spring agronomy

Stepping up disease control

Trials suggest the formulation behind RevyPro is enabling an enhanced performance for the product's two actives. offering growers more than the sum of its parts

ndependent trials indicate using RevyPro (Revysol+ prothioconazole) at T2 in wheat not only offers complimentary benefits, but could also achieve another level of disease control through boosting other fungicide actives in a tank mix.

In fact the work, conducted by Velcourt across multiple sites and vears, consistently suggests this is the case, states the firm's technical director, Nick Anderson. "Having first trialled Revypro in 2023, despite achieving positive results, I was a little unsure of its benefits and where it might fit within a fungicide programme," he explains.

"So we wanted to know whether there was a firm advantage to be had from the RevyPro formulation compared with the other Revysolcontaining products - Revystar XE (Revysol+ fluxapyroxad) and Myresa (Revysol).'

The trials took place across four sites with two protocols - evaluating the performance of RevyPro at T2

compared with other marketleading fungicide products aimed at this timing, plus the outcome of different tank mix combinations.

The trials focussed on septoria activity - the rest of the

programme (T1 and T3) was the same across treatments and was designed to deliver good rust activity, but limited septoria control. There were also fully untreated and untreated at T2 plots for use as controls.

According to Nick, the results were conclusive across both protocols. "The trial indicates that a lower loading of Revysol applied as RevyPro at 1.5 l/ha (75g Revysol+ 150g prothioconazole)



Unexpected results

Although the RevyPro trial results were unexpected given his initial scepticism, Velcourt's Nick Anderson (L) says the data will help to inform Velcourt's strategy moving forward. Pictured with BASF's Jared Bonner.

performs just as well as a higher loading of the active applied as Revystar at 1.0 l/ha (100g Revysol+ 47.5g fluxapyroxad), indicating a formulation benefit with RevyPro."

Critically, the second protocol explored the role of RevyPro as a tank mix partner, which Nick says is where he believes its strength truly lies. "In particular, this looked at different actives to use alongside pydiflumetofen/ Adepidyn and fenpicoxamid/Inatreg which are currently perceived as an industry standard for T2.

"RevyPro mixtures with Inatreg or with Adepidyn outperformed the other

"In a situation with a

combinations of actives in the trial (fenpicoxamid, isoflucypram and straight Revysol), including combinations of Adepidyn and Inatreg. Adepidyn+ RevyPro and Inatreq+

RevyPro mixtures delivered the highest yield responses in the trials.

"Equally in various scenarios, RevyPro with its lower loading of Revysol, is out-performing Myresa (straight Revysol) at a higher rate."

Although the results have proven unexpected given his initial scepticism, Nick says the data will help to inform Velcourt's strategy moving forward. "In a situation where we have a range

of good quality fungicide actives to choose from, understanding how best to fit these together is where growers can gain an advantage.

"A simple one-can solution from a single manufacturer isn't going to cut it, likewise, the most effective partner for the strongest performing active isn't necessarily the second best, as this work indicates."

But what's behind RevyPro's now proven track record? BASF's Jared Bonner explains that aside from containing Revysol which has become a highly important azole, its performance is down to its unique formulation. "This is giving exceptional leaf and ear coverage, with rapid uptake getting both the Revysol and prothioconazole components into the leaf faster than other prothioconazole products.

"This ensures better protection from wash-off and UV degradation, while enabling guicker activation of prothioconazole for enhanced disease activity."

He agrees that combining RevyPro with alternative modes of action within a tank mix offers a robust approach for tackling septoria and rusts, as well as supporting best practice in resistance management. "It's important to note that RevyPro must be mixed with another mode of action when targeting septoria.

"Beyond wheat, RevyPro can also be used in winter and spring barley, offering an excellent fit by controlling of all major diseases: net blotch, rhynchosporium, rust and ramularia."

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 anaerobic soil conditions through remedial work.
Unfortunately, with yet more brutal weather, there were limited opportunities to do so.

"So crops have been stressed – as exhibited through poor vigour – and there's also been some herbicide damage due to the big autumn tank mix stacks used to get back on top of burgeoning grassweed pressure. These are the main factors behind the variability."

Peter, who advises for Agrovista, has been encouraging growers to join him during field walking to provide the evidence behind his decision making. "Commodity prices are appalling to be honest, it makes it really difficult to weigh up and decide what can be realistically spent on a crop even when there is potential."

He adds that he's already encouraging growers to consider their cultivation plans for post-Harvest 2025. "We have to get some air into soils to repair the damage from repeatedly tough conditions. Therefore, now is also a great opportunity to identify poorer performing areas of fields while there's



Role of the T3

The target of a T3 is two-fold: it either provides a top-up for disease control particularly brown rust, or, is to target fusarium, explains Sumitomo Chemical's Ruth Stanley. a growing crop, in readiness for later. This also includes remedial work for drainage."

With his location in the West, Peter is anticipating an explosion of septoria at some point. "Despite its slow start this season, septoria isn't what it was years ago – it's evolved genetically, is virulent and very difficult to control.

"This makes fungicide choice tricky – it's critical to select the right actives, the right timings and the right doses."

Sumitomo Chemical's Ruth Stanley believes this could involve re-thinking the approach to a T3. "While T1 and T2 often receive the most attention, the target of a T3 is two-fold. It either provides a top-up for disease control, particularly brown rust, or, is to target fusarium; the overall purpose being to preserve a crop's potential," she says.

Depending on the required end-goal, this has an implication on spray timing, adds Ruth. "An earlier application during flowering (GS59) is the best position for additional brown rust activity, whereas going slightly later (GS63-65) will offer fusarium control.

"Used alongside the characteristics of an individual variety, this means anticipated spray timings might have to be tweaked," she advises.

A product she suggests could be used in the T3 slot is Sakura/Soleil (tebuconazole+ bromuconazole) because it offers the 'best of both worlds' whether that's targeting brown rust or fusarium.

"Equally, bromuconazole is an active which isn't used so much at the moment. It offers a slightly different option in a programme and so helps to contribute to anti-resistance strategies.

"But at either T3 timing, it'll protect the canopy and ear, mitigate stress and avoid bleaching, seeing the crop through until harvest," she concludes. ● ►



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Time to see the Crop Doctor

With minds on T2s, most crops look reasonably clean and strong but a disease explosion is only a rain shower away, warn experts

onsecutive weeks of mild and dry spring weather have eased the disease pressure facing crops, which could leave some growers pondering how to approach their T2s. However, the variable nature of some crops and often regional nature of disease pressure means there's no 'onefits-all' answer, explains ADAS' Jonathan Blake.

Having viewed the variety plots at Bayer's Crop Doctor site at Walpole St Peter, west of King's Lynn, Jonathan says it's difficult to share a general message. "Some days favour brown rust sporulation, others yellow rust, while it'd be unwise to not consider septoria at T2, even in crops which appear clean.

"Yellow rust appears more prevalent here than septoria at the moment, but septoria has a long latent period of around 21 days. So while many crops appear clean, they're still to see the effects of the rain which fell the week before Easter," he adds.

Looking through the varieties, it's possible to find examples of all the main foliar diseases – septoria, leaf blotch, yellow rust and brown rust – just not all in the same variety, says Jonathan. With this in mind, he comments regarding T2s.

"In most cases, it's likely to be a protectant rather than a curative situation which simplifies decision making. Any of the main foliar threats



Crop Doctor East Having viewed the variety plots at Bayer's Crop Doctor site at Walpole St Peter, ADAS' Jonathan Blake says it's difficult to share a general message regarding disease pressure.

could quickly take hold if conditions favour, so the starting point is to base treatments around active substances with good activity on septoria. "This could be

SDHIs, azoles or Qils, such as isoflucypram, mefentrifluconazole, pydiflumetofen or fenpicoxamid," he suggests.

To understand the protectant performance of fungicides, Jonathan highlights the value of AHDB's fungicide performance curves. "The AHDB performance data gives a clear representation of a fungicide's activity against each of the main foliar threats," he says.

"Some of these may be broader than others in terms of their spectrum, which may simplify T2 applications by reducing the need to add other chemistry."