

TIO Technical News No 3

After the dry June and July the monsoon season has been with us in the Eastern Counties but this is not the case in all parts of the country and most certainly not in many parts of Eastern Scotland.

August rainfall mm:	East Harling, Suffolk	114
	Fakenham, Norfolk	101
	Coningsby Lincs	131
	Market Weighton, Yorks	120
	Coldstream	108
	Dunbar	71
	Coupar Angus	60
	Turriff	67
	Forres	108

Most root crops are now looking much improved having seen relief from heat stress for a few weeks and having been wetted up by natural rainfall. Shape defects on late crops are improving with each week passing as roots are able to relax in moist soils. Crop water use has now dropped dramatically to around 2.5mm per day, less than 20mm per week but there will still be days of warm sunshine when water use can increase to 4mm per day. Care should be taken not to saturate crops with too much irrigation.

Common scab is present on many crops and opportunity to assess its impact on strawing potential should be taken before loading straw into fields. Scab lesions invariably reduce marketability and increase the presence of rots especially of *Mycocentrospora* (liquorice rot).



Common scab - issue of the season 2006?



Liquorice rot developing on wounds

The risk of Sclerotinia infection is now running at a very high level. This is because of constant soil moisture allowing sclerotia to germinate and produce airborne spores combined with the presence of heavy crop canopies which are becoming senescent beneath. Fortunately the crops produced by organic methods usually contain less senescing debris and will often keep free of infection.



Sclerotinia springing structures and infected tops

The risk of Alternaria during August has been very high due to long periods of leaf wetness combined with warm temperatures. Lesions can be expected in all crops in the South together with infections of powdery mildew. In cooler areas no problems are expected.

Carrot fly activity is strong in areas where pest has built up and is expected to continue for another few weeks yet. Trap catches of over 100 flies per trap per week are not exceptional in some areas. The most damaging part of the late season attack is the July and August fraction so the extent of the potential damage to roots has now been already determined.

Early results of insect fencing in commercial practice do not look very positive. Further information has yet to be collected and a review will be issued at a later date.



Severe root mining by carrot fly - 8 to 10 weeks after the onset of egg laying

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Field selection - 2007 crops

Some Issues to consider

1. Position in relation to 2006 carrot and parsnip fields - preferably not closer than 1000metres.
2. Soil texture - early crops and winter lifted crops require light free draining textures.
3. Availability of water for irrigation - lack of water causes big problems with quality, harvesting and sequencing of all early and midseason crops. Dryness in late crops lowers potential packout and returns.
4. Presence of annual weeds - spurrey is probably the worst small weed to remove by hand owing to the difficulties in identification
5. Presence of perennial weeds - couch grass and thistles are best avoided.
6. Fertility - analyse selected fields and any compost resources. Low pH is not an issue, crops will grow happily at levels below pH5.5

Some things we can help you with this winter

2006/7 crop	2007/8 crop
evaluation of storage potential	Site selection
harvest sequencing	Interpretation of all types of analysis
crop costings	Nutrient requirements and fertiliser plan
Irrigation water use justification	Crop planning and sequencing

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