

TIO Growers Technical News No 4



Pre Strawing Checks

It is important to take the opportunity to make a thorough check of the crops which are to be strawed. This will be the last chance to get a good representative assessment before the crop is covered.

A representative sample of at least 50 roots/ha should be made for each field. Samples from the field should be labeled to identify the part of the field from where they were taken, so as to isolate any problem areas. Samples should then be washed clean and inspected in good light; this is best done outside on a bright day. A record of all defects should be made.

After the dry periods in June and July scab infection may well be an issue, and lesions can become infected by secondary pathogens during storage to cause root rots. Photographs of any defects which are not easily identified can be sent to us for diagnosis.

Potential problems to watch out for include: violet root rot, cavity spot, Sclerotinia, scab and liquorice rot. Carrot fly mining from the second generation is now beginning to show. All affected ends and outsides must now be removed as soon as possible.

The cavity spot being picked up at the moment is most likely a result of the heavy rainfall in August, which would have caused high infection risk in some soils. Subsequently the warm weather in September will have been very favourable for disease development on the roots, and explains why symptoms are now being expressed.

Be aware that the cavity spot can increase rapidly in the crops from low to high levels in a relatively short space of time when conditions are warm, so be prepared to re-sample where there is cause for concern.

Once all of the storage crops have been assessed then a harvest plan can be drawn up, prioritising which crops should be harvested first depending on known defects and other risks.

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

Soil Sampling

Next season is not that far away and it is important to have the soil in fields to be used in 2007 analysed. For carrots, parsnips and swedes the elements we are interested in are; Phosphorus (P), Potassium (K), Magnesium (Mg), Copper (Cu), Sulphur (S), Boron (B), Zinc (Zn) and pH. Once reports are available please consult a PSL adviser for nutrient treatment recommendations.

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Monday, 16 October 2006