

forage bites

Helping you farm more forage



ISSUE FOUR



As we march through summer and the days begin to shorten, attention is turning to the autumn and winter ahead. When timing is an integral part of what's happening on farm during autumn, thinking ahead is vital. In this issue of Forage Bites, we look at weed control in new-sown leys and established pastures as weeds continue growing well throughout the changing seasons. And to be sure you know the types of weeds you have and how to treat them, check out the weed wizard and timing tools on the new Forage App.

Forage app tool focus: Grassland Weed Control

The newly launched Corteva Agriscience forage app is free to download and packed with advice and decision-making tools to identify the right seed and crop protection solutions for growing the best forage. Here we look at the tools focusing on weed control in grassland.

Weed Wizard

With a photo library of 74 common weeds, the Weed Wizard makes identification quick and easy, and determines the best product for each specific problem. If you have a combination of weeds in one field, it gives you the option of selecting up to three species before finding the right product solution.

Grassland Herbicide Decision Tree and Directory

Like the weed wizard, the decision tree helps you choose the best product for your situation, taking into account the age of the ley and method of application.

Alongside the Decision Tree, a comprehensive product directory provides all your need to know about each herbicide. This includes where and how to use, dose rates, water volumes, cutting and grazing intervals and the technical specifications.

Timing tool

Timing is critical in weed control. Whether too big or too small, if weeds are not the correct size for spraying, a good kill is not achieved. A common mistake is to spray too early when leaves are small and inadequate amounts of spray are taken up to kill the roots. Sprayed too late after weeds have gone to head and the same is true – not enough chemical reaches the roots. Both result in top kill only.

Using photos of docks and thistles at different stages of growth, the spray timing tool tells you exactly when spraying is ideal.

Weed Cost

Weeds threaten productivity. The weed cost calculator predicts the productivity potential of a field with effective weed control. For example, a 3-hectare field yielding 6t DM/ha with just a 10% thistle infestation could be producing an extra 2,123 litres of milk or grazing nine more sheep. At 50% infestation, these figures increase to 10,614 litres of milk, 41 sheep or 4 beef cattle. All figures assume 50% utilisation.

For more information and links [to download the FREE app, visit: \[corteva.co.uk/forage\]\(http://corteva.co.uk/forage\)](#) or simply scan the QR code.



Protecting autumn reseed

Weed competition can be significant in autumn reseeds. Give young grass the best chance to establish and flourish by checking new leys regularly for any signs of weed infestation and act quickly to control them. In new leys it's important to tackle problem weeds, such as chickweed and seedling docks, early before they damage the new ley's performance and become a more

significant problem.

Weed control is easier and cheaper when they are small, and the roots haven't propagated or had the opportunity to grow bigger and deeper. Ideally this is when the grass is at the two-to-three leaf stage. Although many grassland herbicide products dictate grass should be established, over a year old, at the time of treatment, [Envy®](#) can be used earlier.

Envy® is a selective herbicide ideal for new sown leys. It can be used to control chickweed, mayweeds, buttercups, dandelions and seedling docks, and has good grass safety. It is available in a 3-litre pack and can be applied any time between 1st February and 30th November at 1-1.5 litres/ha, making it ideal for autumn reseeds.



Maize seed treatment registration changes on the horizon

Maize seed treatment, Mesuro, has already been withdrawn from the market and its main replacement, Korit, is expected to follow suit in the not-too-distant future. As a result, we are working hard to develop a suitable alternative maize seed treatment to protect your maize crop during establishment.

Multiple, large-block trials have been taking place across the country this season in fields considered susceptible to damage from bird grazing. So far, results are encouraging. The newly registered treatment, Takla, has been compared directly to seed treated with Korit. Plant establishment rates in both treatments have been broadly comparable and where losses have occurred it has been to a noticeably limited extent with the new treatment.



Autumn weed control

Weed competition can still be significant in late summer and early autumn, so a control strategy is vital to protect your grassland from yield losses caused by weeds over the coming months.

Where tough perennial weeds, like docks, thistles, chickweed, nettles, ragwort, buttercups and dandelions, are competing and winning against grass for light, nutrients and space, the yield losses can be considerable. A 10% dock or thistle infestation, for example, can equate to a 10% reduction in grass dry matter yield. During autumn, these perennial weeds are still growing actively but also beginning to send nutrients down to their roots ready for winter and can take herbicide with them. **Forefront[®] T** moves to the roots of weeds delivering long-term control of tough, broad-leaved weeds, while at the same time being very safe to grass. An application of 2.0 litres Forefront T can provide a fast solution to controlling weeds and put grass back on track.



Post-flowering buttercup treatment

Spraying buttercups before they have flowered is best. But if you missed the opportunity, it is still possible to control them after they have flowered, although around 10% less effective. To treat buttercups after flowering, **Envy[®]** can be used at 2.0 L/ha until 30th November.



Spraying pitfalls

If you're planning to spray in the next couple of months, these are some tips on how to avoid the common pitfalls and see the best result from your investment.

Spraying weeds which are too big

If weeds are too large, less of the herbicide is translocated down to the roots and only top kill is achieved. The ideal time to spray is when weeds are growing actively and the leaves are healthy but before they flower. If you're not sure when to spray, use the timing tool on the Corteva Forage app. If weeds are too large to spray, cut/top first and spray the subsequent regrowth after 2-3 weeks when they have reached the correct size.

Using the wrong product

To achieve the best level of weed control use the right product for the job. Using the wrong product is likely to be ineffective and therefore expensive, as well as risking

safety or stewardship concerns. Check the product label carefully for its indications. The Corteva Forage app also has a Grassland Herbicide Decision Tree to help determine the correct product to use.

Choosing a tank mix

When selecting herbicides, it's tempting to opt for a tank mix rather than a formulated product. But tank mixes often combine several moderately susceptible products in order to achieve a susceptible weed rating. An incorrect mix of products can cause costly and time-consuming errors. Mixing together leftover products can have the same effect. Formulated products are tested rigorously in the lab and field, containing everything you need in one pack. They are also easier for you to handle, mix and apply.

Controlling nettles

At this point in the season nettle patches topped earlier in the year are likely to be reappearing, and now is a good time to spray the regrowth. As with all weeds, nettles should be sprayed when they are growing actively, with healthy green leaves so they take up enough herbicide for translocation to the roots and a thorough kill. Forefront T can be used to control nettles on pasture grazed by cattle and sheep, while **Grazon Pro** can be used in a knapsack for spot treatment. If stewardship requirements prohibit **Forefront T** being used with a boom spray, moderate control of nettles can be achieved with **Doxstar[®] Pro**, or **Thistlex[®]**.

Build resilience into your winter crops

Weather patterns in the autumn have been unpredictable in recent years, with above average rainfall in many areas of the UK. Too much rain can leach nitrogen or create waterlogged soils leading to nitrogen loss through greenhouse gases. This escape of nitrogen into the environment is not good economically or environmentally. Build resilience into your cropping programme by including a nitrogen stabiliser which protects valuable nitrogen, improves your winter crops and delivers a clear environmental

benefit on your farm. Nitrogen stabilisers slow down the conversion of ammonium to nitrate keeping nitrogen available to crops for longer to optimise yield and quality. Corteva's nitrogen stabiliser products feature Optinyte technology and are sold under the N-Lock and Instinct brands. By applying Optinyte products to your seedbed prior to drilling, you can slow down the de-nitrification process and reduce leaching during the wet autumn

months when soils are most vulnerable to leaching. Controlling nitrogen in this way has a double benefit. It keeps nitrogen available to crops for longer to raise yield and quality, and it reduces the environmental impact by reducing nitrogen losses through leaching and greenhouse gases by up to 50%.

Optinyte can be applied to winter cereals and rape through a crop sprayer or within slurry. Farm trials show average yield increases of 4.7% in winter wheat.



Silage inoculants: what and why this autumn

Silage inoculants are more than just an insurance policy; they make good silage even better. High-quality silage is vital to the profitability of livestock businesses. Use the right inoculant in the right circumstances and see your forage value reach new heights.

Late cut silage

If your late cut silage is wetter than you'd like, the sugars will be low. Pioneer Brand [1188](#) remains a popular choice for farmers ensiling grass cut at 25% dry matter content or less. Containing six strains of lactic acid-producing bacteria, 1188 enhances fermentation by using nearly all available sugar types and rapidly lowering pH.

For drier grass where mould growth is a concern, [11G22 Rapid React](#)[®] is recommended. It gives drier silage aerobic stability on opening from as little as one week after ensiling. Pioneer Brand

[11G22 Rapid React](#) combines several of the powerful lactic acid-producing strains found in 1188 along with Pioneer's new, fast-acting strain of *Lactobacillus buchneri*. This innovative product speeds up lactic fermentation and prevents heating and mould growth.

Maize silage

Maize is one of the most economical forages in terms of yield and energy value, if harvested at the right time. As the maize harvest approaches, the focus shifts from grass to maize silage for both forage and biogas.

Silage inoculants help lock in a maize crop's nutrients and dry matter, resulting in less energy and dry matter loss and greater animal performance. The Pioneer Brand inoculants suitable for the maize silage are tailored to its end use.

For maize ensiled for gas production, [11CH4](#) works by unlocking nutrients and

releasing energy, significantly increasing methane production. Research shows [11CH4](#) can increase methane yield by 8% while improving aerobic stability and reducing silage losses by 50%.

[11CFT](#) is suitable for ensiled maize being fed to dairy or beef cattle. 11CFT contains a novel strain of *Lactobacillus buchneri* to reduce shrink losses and help improve the aerobic stability. The inoculant causes a rapid drop in pH, helping to retain starch and sugar, increase fibre digestion and maximize the feed value, reducing the need for bypass protein supplementation. For the best results, wait 60 days after ensiling before feeding out.

Alternatively, [Pioneer Brand 11C33 Rapid React](#) contains an additional new strain of next-generation *Lactobacillus buchneri*, which speeds up aerobic stability. This allows treated silage to be fed from seven days after ensiling.

Ask a question

Q Do I have to wait 12 months before I can treat a new sown grass ley with herbicide?

A Many grassland herbicide products specify grass should be over a year old before it is treated, but Envy can be used earlier. Envy is a selective herbicide that is safe to use on new sown leys from as early as the three-leaf growth stage. It can be applied any time between 1st February and 30th November at 1-1.5 litres/ha, making it ideal for autumn reseed.

Q Is Forefront T safe to grass?

A Yes, Forefront T is very safe to grass and for use on established grassland grazed by cattle and sheep. Livestock can be returned to the field seven days after treatment. Treated grass should not be used for silage, hay or haylage, so should not be used on cutting platforms after the final cut.

Q Which silage inoculant is best for maize silage used for biogas production?

A Pioneer Brand 11CH4 is recommended as it works by unlocking nutrients and releasing energy, significantly increasing methane production. Research shows it can increase methane yield by 8% while halving silage losses.

Technical Hotline

For queries on weed control in grassland, maize and forage crops, use of silage inoculants, selecting a maize hybrid to match your situation, please contact our technical hotline.

0800 689 8899

ukhotline@corteva.com

Forage Team

Our local area managers and forage specialists based throughout the UK are here to help with technical and product enquiries. This month we learn more about our team member in the South West.

Simon Preece offers the ideal combination of practical farming experience and technical expertise.

Having grown up on a dairy farm in North Cornwall, Simon headed to agricultural college in Wales and completed an HND with a focus on forage production and utilisation. He subsequently cut his teeth selling fertiliser and grass seed for UKF in East Riding before becoming a technical specialist with grass seed breeder, Mommersteeg.

Simon's career with Pioneer began in 1989, selling maize seed and silage inoculants, when the UK maize area was just 25,000 hectares, roughly 10% of what it is today.



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USE PLANT PROTECTION PRODUCTS SAFELY. Always read the label and product information before use. For further information including warning phrases and symbols refer to label.

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