

## **Update 2 - Wet or Dry?**

The current weather forecast predicts rainfall in the southern half of the country this Sunday, which will be the first significant rain for over a month in some areas.

Longer term forecasts, depending upon which weather web site is visited, predict showers for up to three weeks.

Where does that leave maize drilling? Well seed will certainly be better in the ground pre this rain, with the current warmth and now moisture, rapid germination can be expected. If drilling is delayed by three weeks then yields may suffer. The bottom line is to do all you can to get seed in the ground ASAP.

### **To roll or not to roll?**

The issue now, for those that have already drilled into dry seedbeds, is to guess how much rain is going to fall! – If we only get a small amount, then the fields should be rolled to conserve moisture, on the other hand where higher volumes of rain falls rolling could cause capping and slow down germination.

What would be my choice - I would roll where the land is dry right through to the seed, as rolling will consolidate and help retain rainfall in the seed layer - and then pray we do not get too much! However, where there is currently moisture at seed depth, then I would leave fields well alone and allow the forecasted rainfall to do its job – If the rain does not materialise, then consider rolling next week.

### **Pre-emergence weed control and rainfall.**

We all know that Pendimethalin needs moisture to make it active - with rain forecast it would be sensible to apply a pre-emergence spray to drilled crops this weekend, before the rainfall. Apply at the full recommended rate for the product (normally 3.75 l/ha if stomp is being used).

### **Drilling next week? - make sure starter fertiliser is used.**

For those yet to drill, if we get a lot of rain then seedbeds may become poorer, which will mean that nutrients are not rapidly available around the seed due to the cloddy nature of the seedbed. If this is the case then do ensure that starter fertiliser is used, MAP or DAP at 1 cwt/ac will encourage the crop to grow more quickly away from any seedbed issues.

### **Drilling after grass**

Due to the dry weather, the grass has nicked most of the available soil moisture and so when these are being ploughed up the fields are very dry - if possible, these fields should be sprayed off with glyphosate even before the grass is harvested to stop more moisture loss - at least if it then rains some moisture will be returned to the soil. Grass does have a high transpiration rate and so the effective loss of moisture from the soil at this time of year is very high.

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