



## Cost-effective disease control in OSR

***With the renewed interest in growing OSR this autumn and the importance of getting the crops off to the best start, early disease prevention is vital and can be achieved cost-effectively is the message from leading generic manufacturers Life Scientific.***

Higher prices and impressions of reduced flea beetle pressure are luring many growers back into oilseed rape this season. It is thought oilseed rape acreages for this autumn could be around the 350,000 ha mark.

However, there is still a risk in getting the crop established, and this has to be weighed up against any costs, recognises Life Scientific's country manager Ruth Stanley.

“Everyone knows the importance of getting establishment right, but once that crop is in the ground you have got to make sure it is protected – preferably without spending too much money on it- but still giving the crop what it needs to grow and be healthy.”

“This means doing all that is possible to protect against pests or disease, particularly at the challenging early part of the season. Disease control in OSR is much more straightforward than pest control, so it is important, and possible to get this right.”

Light Leaf Spot continues to be one of the most damaging diseases to oilseed rape yields with potential losses of 1t/ha, and earlier sown crops are at the greatest risk.

According to Bayer's SpotCheck, Light Leaf Spot was detected a month earlier in 2020 than in 2019, with higher levels of infection across the country up around 19% from the previous year.

“We are seeing the recycling of spores earlier and faster than before so it is important to take an early approach to treating Light Leaf Spot to prevent higher disease levels later in the season.”

Monitoring crops and making use of disease forecasting tools is a useful way of predicting risk, suggests Mrs Stanley. “Disease prediction can be made easier with the AHDB's forecast tool, however where Light Leaf Spot is actually suspected, leaves can be sent in for analysis to Bayer's SpotCheck.”

All varieties are at risk, but particular attention needs to be paid to any varieties that have a disease resistance score of less than 6.

“Phoma can sometimes be neglected as Light Leaf Spot takes the headlines, but phoma lesions can progress into quite damaging stem cankers which severely impact water and nutrient movement through the plant – impacting plants ability to grow away from slugs, pigeons etc.

“Early infections on smaller plants can cause losses of up to 0.5t/ha so its important to prioritise smaller plants and apply a fungicide when treatment threshold levels are reached.”

Life Scientific offers a very cost-effective, two-stacked triazole fungicide, Esker. A reverse engineered formulation of Kestrel, Esker contains 160g/l prothioconazole and 80g/l tebuconazole. This stacked approach is recommended to reduce reliance on prothioconazole alone.

“It provides curative activity over just straight tebuconazole which is important to manage Light Leaf Spot and Phoma as well as offering canopy management, says Mrs Stanley.

Recommendations are to use 1.0 l/ha Esker in October – December and a further 1.0 l/ha in the spring from the onset of stem extension. A maximum total dose of 2.0 l/ha Esker can be used in crops of oilseed rape. Esker can also be used in the Autumn for Phoma leaf spot/stem canker when threshold levels of 10 – 20% leaves showing Phoma lesions are met.

“For early sown or vigorously growing OSR consider additional plant growth regulation by using Zonor, a straight tebuconazole fungicide,” she adds. “As a guide for best PGR effects use 25g/ha of Zonor for every crop leaf emerged.

For more information on Esker and Zonor please visit the Life Scientific website

<https://lifescientific.com/products/>

**Autumn 2021**