



Tracking the pulse of the national crop

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Farmers and agronomists will have better access to a wider range of on-line crop management information thanks to the launch of the revamped CropMonitor website. The free service can be accessed at www.cropmonitor.co.uk. New for this season are improved navigation, extended regional and national reports, greater access to risk prediction tools, inclusion of encyclopaedic information and access to crop development information. Interpretation of monitoring data on crop development and health is being strengthened through increased input from leading agronomists, ensuring relevance and accuracy. These enhancements to the well-established CropMonitor site are supported through agreement of a long-term funding package from HGCA.

CropMonitor draws information from an extensive monitoring programme funded by Defra, which includes annual national surveys of pests and diseases in wheat and oilseed rape. At the heart of CropMonitor lies the live monitoring network, comprising 10 field sites across England, which are used to track epidemic development in-season. Data collected from untreated plots of four wheat cultivars (Robigus, Einstein, Solstice and Ambrosia) at each site will be used to determine disease pressures across the country and derive outputs from the latest risk prediction schemes. Crop reports including regular updates on pest and disease activity, are published on-line, helping crop managers make informed spray decisions.

The success of CropMonitor as an information source for farmers and agronomists in recent years has been acknowledged by HGCA who have now agreed to support the website for a further three years, making ongoing improvements to the site possible. "There is no doubt that users of CropMonitor regard the impartial information highly", says Dr Judith Turner, senior pathologist at CSL, "and we are responding to feedback by introducing text alerts for even more rapid communication of pest and disease risks."



With HGCA and Defra funding in place for three years, the future of CropMonitor as the major information source on the health and management of arable crops is assured. “The strong partnership of nationally recognised research and consultancy organisations which contribute to CropMonitor means that the information available to the industry is of high quality, and recent years have shown it to be reliable”, concludes Dr Turner.

Ends



Notes for editors

1. CropMonitor is a collaborative project involving CSL, ADAS, TAG, AICC and Farming Online and is funded by Defra and HGCA.
2. CropMonitor is a free and impartial service, which provides information about the health and management of winter sown wheat, barley and oilseed rape. Data gathered are being analysed to identify disease and pest risk, seasonal variation in disease development and the effectiveness of control strategies. There are several elements to CropMonitoring network..
 - in-season monitoring of epidemic development to provide regular updates of regional disease risk - in collaboration with TAG and ADAS
 - monitoring of fusarium risk and risk of mycotoxin contamination
 - disease and pest monitoring in commercially grown winter wheat and winter oilseed rape
3. Users can register with the CropMonitor team to receive regular email alerts, at key points during the season, of pest and disease risk. These email alerts qualify recipients for BASIS and NRoSO points.
4. For further information contact Dr Judith Turner at Central Science Laboratory on 01904 462 220, or via j.turner@csl.gov.uk.