

June Blog

The wheat is now in ear and weed competition is likely to be at its greatest. Plots which have a large weed burden are looking nutrient-stressed. The weeds are also probably having a large impact as they are shading the wheat by intercepting the sunlight and, with current temperatures soaring, taking any available moisture.



This picture demonstrates the weed pressure in poorly controlled areas of the trial.

The charlock has almost finished flowering, but where plants have remained unchecked there has been a very successful seed set. This will have implications for the follow-on crops grown on this site by topping up the weed seed bank. The poppies are now blooming and again where they have remained unchecked they have grown multiple flower heads and a large tap root. The AHDB has stated that a poppy plant produces around 20,000 seeds per plant which can remain viable for up to 100 years! Charlock seed returns are similar with 16-25,000 seeds per plant and a quoted seed longevity of over 5 years. The characteristics of both these weeds make them a great challenge for future cropping. In addition there are still plenty of other weeds thriving including field and ivy leaf speedwell which has already completed at least one lifecycle and lesser amounts of fumitory, cleavers, blackgrass and pansy.





Interestingly, in the adjoining field to the weeding trial we are growing a crop of spring rye which is flourishing away with a very low weed burden within the crop. Both of these sites are in second cereals showing how husbandry choices can influence weed burden. This spring rye is a competitive crop partly due to its height shading out the weeds and also through spring sowing and the lower weed burdens this often generates.