

Winter cereals drilling stewardship: checklist



Seed treatments are an essential part of crop protection for winter cereals and we need to ensure that we keep them. They are so simple to use that it is all too easy to forget that they are pesticides and that sowing seeds needs the same careful approach as spraying pesticides. This short leaflet is designed to remind winter cereals growers of the main points to consider when sowing the crop*.

- On farm the main risks come from:**
- Accidental seed spills
 - Seed not covered by soil during sowing
 - Dust abraded from seed

When handling seed use appropriate PPE. Take special care to avoid spills and collect empty bags near footpaths and areas of public access. Winter cereals seeds pose a special risk because they are a potential food source for many birds and small mammals.

Avoid dust:

- Ensure seed is treated with Bayer-approved application equipment. This ensures that seed treatments are applied accurately with uniform loading on each seed and allows improved quality assurance checks and record keeping. It can also ensure appropriate stickers are used to keep the treatment on the seed
- Handle bags with care to avoid abrasion of the treatment from the seed
- When emptying bulk seed bags, take care to minimise the distance between bag and drill to minimise seed abrasion
- Do not tip dust into drill – there should be minimal dust if treatments have been applied correctly
- Do not drill too fast for the prevailing conditions

To avoid spills:

Any size of spill is important – deal with it immediately

- Ensure drilling equipment is properly maintained and will not allow seed to leak
- Take time and care when loading seed hopper
- Always fill the drill where any spills can be caught or buried safely (never fill over grass or other vegetation where spills cannot easily be cleared)
- Ensure no seed is released when seed and equipment is in transit
- Do not allow seed to be spilt during calibration or operating checks

Always carry a spill kit which should comprise:

- Spade to cover or retrieve spilt seed
- Spare bag including label to save seed recovered
- Canvas sheet for use when calibrating the drill

Ensure all seed is covered and not exposed for birds and wildlife to eat:

- Treated seed must always be sown using a drill or techniques that place the seed in the soil and ensure that it is covered. Do not broadcast
- Set up and check equipment on an area yet to be sown
- Check seedbed is of appropriate quality for drilling technique being used
- Ensure drill is moving forward before lowering coulters into ground
- Take care when lifting drill in and out of work – ideally shut off seed mechanism a metre before row ends
- Ensure headlands are drilled last, so as to incorporate any spilt seed into the soil

After drilling:

- Remove all seed from drill, ensuring seed and dust is collected into labelled bags for safe disposal. Never burn treated seed
- Collect all empty sacks before leaving field
- Never re-use empty bags that have contained treated seed for any purpose other than storing original treated seed
- Store left-over seed in original bags with labels in a secure store for re-use or safe disposal
- Ensure dry, safe storage of seed that prevents access by pets, livestock, birds and small mammals
- Wash hands immediately after use and before eating and drinking
- Make record of operations, settings and whether any problems encountered

* More details appropriate for oilseed rape and for other crops can be found in our guide to safe and effective use of seed treatments which you can obtain at www.bayercropscience.co.uk/safeseed

