

Pepper crop



David Townley in a plot treated with Stomp preplanting and Butisan + Gamit applied post planting

Demonstration helps growers plan vegetable weed control

A demonstration of the key herbicide products for vegetable brassicas, by crop protection distributors UAP at Elsoms Seeds' vegetable open days last month, showed Stomp (pendimethalin) will become more important in future weed control programmes.

"One of its criticisms is that, applied preplanting, the transplanter and coulters disturbs the seal so a row of weeds springs up along where the coulters has been – but that doesn't seem evident in this trial," said UAP agronomist David Townley.

UAP colleague Mike Leatherland said that Stomp, applied at 3.3 litres/ha, had done a 'reasonable job' except on redshank. "On its own, it's not good enough but it may help other materials applied post planting," he said.

Townley said the aim of the demonstration was to show growers how to make best use of a limited choice. With the loss of Dacthal (chlorthal-dimethyl) in spring 2011 and new restrictions on the use of metazachlor from next autumn,

the situation was going to worsen.

The restriction on the use of metazachlor to a total of 1,000g/ha over a three-year period, in order to comply with the Water Framework directive, means growers are going to have to plan their cropping further ahead and farther afield. Townley said it might even see a resurgence of brassica production in traditional growing areas of Bedfordshire and the Vale of Evesham if more land has to be brought into rotations.

● At 455g/litre a new version of Stomp, Stomp Aqua, is the most concentrated formulation of pendimethalin on the market, reducing the amount of product needed to treat the same area, says its manufacturer BASF. The active ingredient is encapsulated and released from the capsules in response to fluctuations in temperature and moisture. Other benefits include less staining of pipes and low odour. "We're re-applying for all the off-labels which we hope will come through by the spring," said speciality crops manager Robert Storer.