

Introduction

Many diseases challenge the yield, quality and hence profitability of barley and so need to be controlled effectively.

In the UK, barley crops range from September-sown, 6-row feed varieties to spring-sown, 2-row varieties for malting. Regardless of variety, sowing date, location or market, disease management in barley aims to maximise grain numbers by protecting tillering and ear formation.

Too often disease management in barley is based on principles established for wheat. However, the two crops are fundamentally different and different approaches to disease management are needed.

Barley yield depends on achieving high numbers of fertile ears on a unit area of land; whereas wheat yield depends on prolonging green canopy duration to fill the large potential capacity of grains.

In barley, disease can affect growth and survival of both tillers and spikelets, and a high initial plant count is important. In contrast, wheat has a high capacity to compensate for poor establishment and disease seldom affects growth before flowering.

This guide aims to provide barley growers with up-to-date information on diseases that affect their crop and options for control.



The barley disease management guide 2009

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