

## Issue 11 Sunday 7 June 2026

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### Editor's note

Parts of the country have received heavy rainfall over the past week, while others continue to experience mild autumn conditions. In some cases, favourable conditions have resulted in crops in FAR trials progressing through growth stages slightly faster than usual. Weed pressure has also remained high, and our aphid trapping network has recorded higher-than-expected numbers for this time of year.

Most autumn-sown cereal crops have now progressed beyond tillering, although some crops in southern regions may not yet have reached this stage. If mild conditions persist, these crops remain at risk from aphid-vectoring viruses such as YDV.

In FAR trials, [herbicide](#) was applied in a timely manner to manage weed pressure. As is standard practice, foliar insecticides have not been applied to FAR trials, although many growers have chosen to do so in commercial crops. The [article below](#) provides further information on current aphid activity and associated risks.

Regular crop monitoring remains essential. Be sure to check your paddocks frequently and stay alert for signs of pest, weed, and disease pressure. FAR has a range of resources available to support crop monitoring and management, some of which are highlighted below.

## Regional updates

### **Southern Arable Research Hub**

The Southern Arable Research Hub at Knapdale, North of Gore, is entering its third season. Find out more about what's been happening on-site [here](#).

### **Southland**

It has been a kind autumn for most in the south of the south. Crops are looking good and growing well. There is some [slug pressure](#), particularly in the April-drilled crops.

Don't forget to register for the [Winton Wormwise workshop](#) before Tuesday. I look forward to seeing you at this arable-specific workshop held in collaboration with Beef + Lamb NZ. FAR will also be presenting to the Oat Industry Group on 23 July, providing an update on a new collaborative FAR-OIG project that supports the OIG breeding programme and the agronomic management of emerging oat cultivars in the Southland region. *Nicole Foote, FAR Regional Facilitator*

### **South Canterbury/North Otago**

May has delivered some unseasonably warm temperatures and lower than expected rain fall. After the overcast summer harvest conditions, it is starting to dry out in South Canterbury/North Otago. Crops are looking okay at the moment. Growers are encouraged to keep an eye on crops for aphid risk and use

FAR's [Aphid Chat](#) to monitor numbers. The lack of rain has been making it difficult to find a window to use Kerb (propryamide) for weed management. Grain prices are improving but other contract options remain flat. *Philippa Rawlinson, FAR Regional Facilitator*

## **Mid Canterbury**

After one of the driest Mays on record (many areas receiving less than 10 mm of precipitation) most growers would appreciate some rain. The dry conditions have meant the odd irrigator is still running, particularly where autumn-sown crops need help to establish.

Harvest is now complete for most growers, with only some maize grain still to come off. Autumn planting has generally gone well, helped by good ground conditions and warmer temperatures; a welcome change from last year's wet May. Growers are keeping an eye on [slugs](#) and [grass weeds](#) with crop walks worthwhile while conditions remain mild. *Cindy Lowe, FAR Regional Facilitator*

## **Northern South Island**

Ironically (given the wet harvest), things are starting to get dry on-farm for many as winter begins this week. A shower of rain on Tuesday night/Wednesday delivered 5-8mm across the plains, aiding pre-emerge herbicide applications on cereal crops.

On farm things are quiet. Post-emerge sprays are being put on later-drilled cereal crops. The settled autumn weather has allowed for grain that was harvested wet to be moved through driers. If your grain was high in moisture, remember to keep checking silos. There have been some reports of storage problems.

Stock work continues for those winter grazing lambs and/or cattle. Growers are taking advantage of the winter period to do general farm maintenance and servicing. *Donna Lill, FAR Regional Facilitator*

## **Northern North Island**

After a dry spell, recent rain has been welcome, although not enough to really kick off annual growth yet. In some cases this has meant delays in bringing on winter dairy grazers or lambs.

Planning for next season is underway, with forward purchases of some inputs, fertiliser and sprays. Growers are hoping to hedge costs and looking for an upward movement in payment for next season's product to help cover the increased cost of inputs.

For many, the focus is on continual improvement of the system for improving soil quality, lowering N inputs and strategic N placement via banding. *Rachel Mudge, FAR Regional Facilitator*

## **Crop management**

### **General**

#### **Slugs**

Despite some regions experiencing a very dry May, reports of high slug pressure are consistently coming into FAR. Use slug mats and check them either first thing in the morning or before bed each night. If slug numbers are at potentially damaging levels, remember the following:

1. Calculate the correct rate of baits to manage the slug population in each paddock.

2. Put out baits when slugs are active – baits applied too early may not be effective once slug activity ramps up.
3. Use the appropriately sized bait and formulation for your situation. Some products are designed to hit populations hard and early, while others have a greater residual effect. Read the label and consider your options.
4. Continue monitoring and rebaiting if necessary. Baits will never kill all slugs, so if you knock them back early, they may build up to problem levels again before the crop is large enough to resist this damage.

The updated list of slug management products available in New Zealand can be found [here](#).

## Cereals

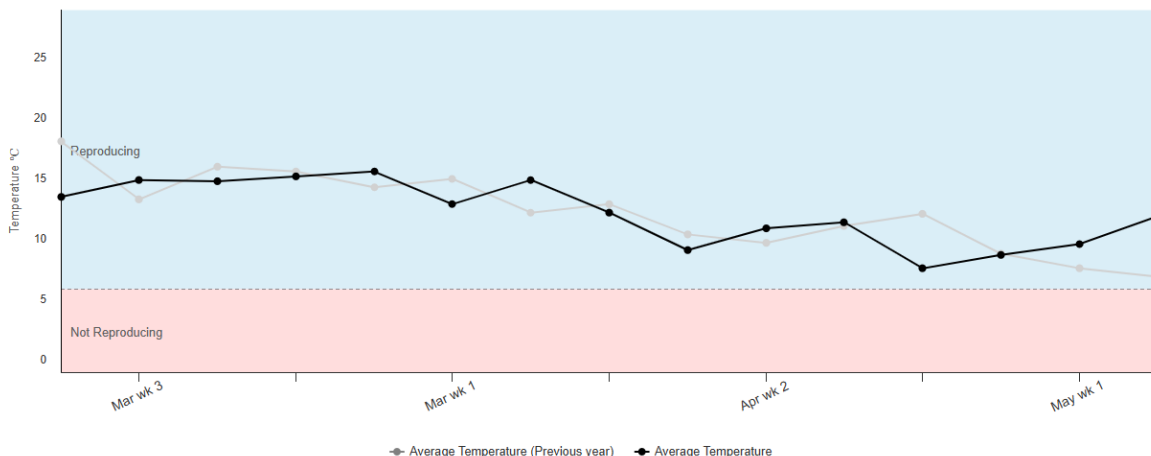
### Aphid monitoring

The first data from the final aphid monitoring sites to be set up (in Southbridge and Lincoln) is now available on [Aphid Chat](#).

The season has been mild so far, and most sites have been recording slightly higher numbers of winged aphids caught on sticky traps than the long-term average. With the continuing mild weather in many regions, ongoing monitoring of your paddock, as well as keeping an eye on the weather forecast, will help inform your decision to apply foliar insecticides to cereals once they are getting close to tillering (when the crop is susceptible).

If aphid numbers don't reduce to usual winter levels in the next couple of weeks, an autumn or follow-up spray may be required. The choice of spray at this time of year is also quite important, with beneficial insects (particularly parasitic wasps) being vital in delaying how quickly aphid populations are able to build back up. For more information, and to see how aphid numbers are tracking in your region, please visit [Aphid Chat](#). Thank you to those growers who reached out to FAR to let us know of the issues with the mobile version of the Aphid Chat website. The PC version continues to work as usual, and the mobile site should now be working properly.

Moving forward into winter, if the mild conditions persist it may pay to maintain vigilance and continue to monitor for wingless aphids. These can be difficult to find when crops are small, so using weather data can often be more reliable. Temperature graphs on Aphid Chat (see the graph for Chertsey below) are a good way to see if aphid populations are likely to be increasing. When the line is well above the division between blue and pink, aphids are able to reproduce quickly, leading to secondary spread within the crop.



## Post-emergence weed management

Much of Canterbury has been dry, which can cause some pre-emergence herbicides to lose efficacy. If you are worried about pre-emergence herbicide ‘misses’ it is important to walk your paddocks and get a sense for where the problem areas are, and what weed species are coming up. For assistance in identifying weeds FAR’s handy “ute guides” are available [here](#) and [here](#). Be wary of overusing Group 2 chemistry (e.g. Glean®, Hussar®, Othello®), especially if no other herbicide or weed control is used on the crop, as grass weed resistance to these herbicides is becoming more common on New Zealand arable farms.

As mentioned above, conditions on many farms have been dry. This may be an opportunity to try alternative weed management techniques such as tine weeding, which works best in dry soils. For more on this and other IWM practices, click [here](#).

An **incomplete** selection of post-emergent herbicides approved for use in wheat is shown below. Refer to individual product labels for individual weed species controlled.

Product	Active Ingredient	Weeds controlled	Mode-of-Action group(s)
Duplosan® Super	Mecoprop + dichlorprop + MCPA	Broadleaf weeds	4
Glean® + generics	Chlorsulfuron	Broadleaf weeds	2
Hussar®	Iodosulfuron	Broadleaf weeds and grasses	2
Image®	Mecoprop + bromoxynil + ioxynil	Broadleaf weeds	4 + 6
IPU 500 Twister™ Protugan® etc.	Isoproturon	Broadleaf weeds and grasses	5
Kamba® and generics	Dicamba	Broadleaf weeds	4
Othello®	Diflufenican + mesosulfuron + iodosulfuron	Broadleaf weeds and grasses	2 + 12
Paradigm™	halauxifen-methyl + florasulam	Broadleaf weeds	2 + 4
Puma® S and others	Fenoxaprop	Wild oats, <i>Phalaris</i>	1
Pulsar® Quasar™	Bentazone + MCPA	Broadleaf weeds	6 + 4
Quantum™	Diflufenican	Broadleaf weeds	12
Rexade™ GoDRI	Halauxifen-methyl + pyroxsulam	Broadleaf weeds and grasses	2 + 4
Saxon™	Mecoprop-p + MCPA + fluroxypyr	Broadleaf weeds	4
Stratos™ Crusader™	Flamprop	Wild oats	0
Trimec® and others	Mecoprop + MCPA + dicamba	Broadleaf weeds	4
Tower®	Chlorotoluron + pendimethalin + diflufenican	Broadleaf weeds and grasses	5 + 3 + 12

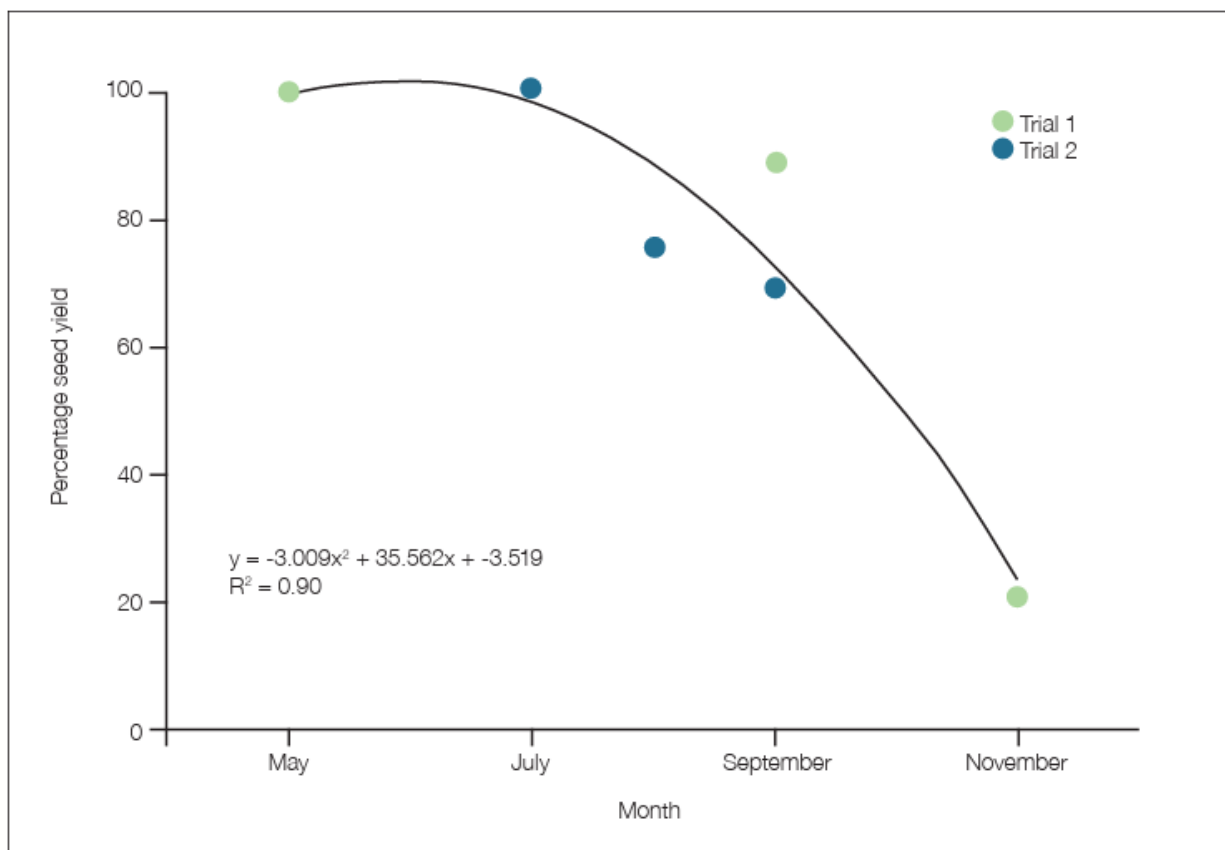
<b>Twinax® XTRA</b>	Pinoxaden	Wild oats, <i>Phalaris</i> , and ryegrass	1
<b>Multiple generics</b>	2,4-D	Broadleaf weeds	4
<b>Versatill™</b>	Clopyralid	Broadleaf weeds	4

## Herbage

### Closing date in tall fescue and cocksfoot seed crops

A range of approaches can be used for closing tall fescue. Some growers build up autumn bulk and make baleage in late May, using this as their closing. Others graze through early winter and close in July. Both approaches work with many cultivars. Cocksfoot grazing often continues to mid-July, but later closing, e.g. August, can depress yields (Figure 1).

Further information can be found in FAR’s recent publication, [FAR Focus 16: Cocksfoot Seed Production](#).



**Figure 1:** Cocksfoot seed yield from two trials (2012-13 and 2016-17) in the Methven area. Yield is expressed as a percentage of seed yield from the earliest closing date.

## Oilseed rape

### *Winter weed and disease management*

Oilseed rape (OSR) crops can help get on top of problem weed populations that can arise when cereals and grass seed crops dominate the rotation. Because of this, getting your herbicide programme right is vital. Herbicide programmes in OSR are usually based around propyzamide (Kerb®, Polka® and others), a Group 3 herbicide, with or without clethodim (Group 1). Grass weeds have been detected in New Zealand with resistance to Group 1 herbicides, and while clethodim often remains effective at first in these circumstances, it will often lose efficacy in a few years if weeds are displaying tolerance to other Group 1 herbicides. In this context propyzamide becomes even more important. Some key considerations when applying propyzamide are listed below:

- Cold (even frosty) weather is recommended when applying propyzamide. Soil temperatures should be below 10°C. If imminent rain is forecast (ideally 15-20mm), or even actively falling, this will help move the active ingredient into the root zone.
- Use 2L/ha in most situations, increasing to 2.5 L/ha if there is a known grass weed issue.
- Ensure OSR plants have a minimum of three true leaves before application to avoid crop damage.
- A FAR/PureOil NZ study in 2025 showed that propyzamide was just as effective when applied in late May (as opposed to June or July) at controlling ryegrass and hairgrass weeds, especially if clethodim was also a part of the herbicide programme. (Note that hairgrass is suppressed, but not controlled by clethodim.) There was some evidence that later applications (in July) were less effective than in May or June.

## Weather Updates

### *Seasonal climate outlook*

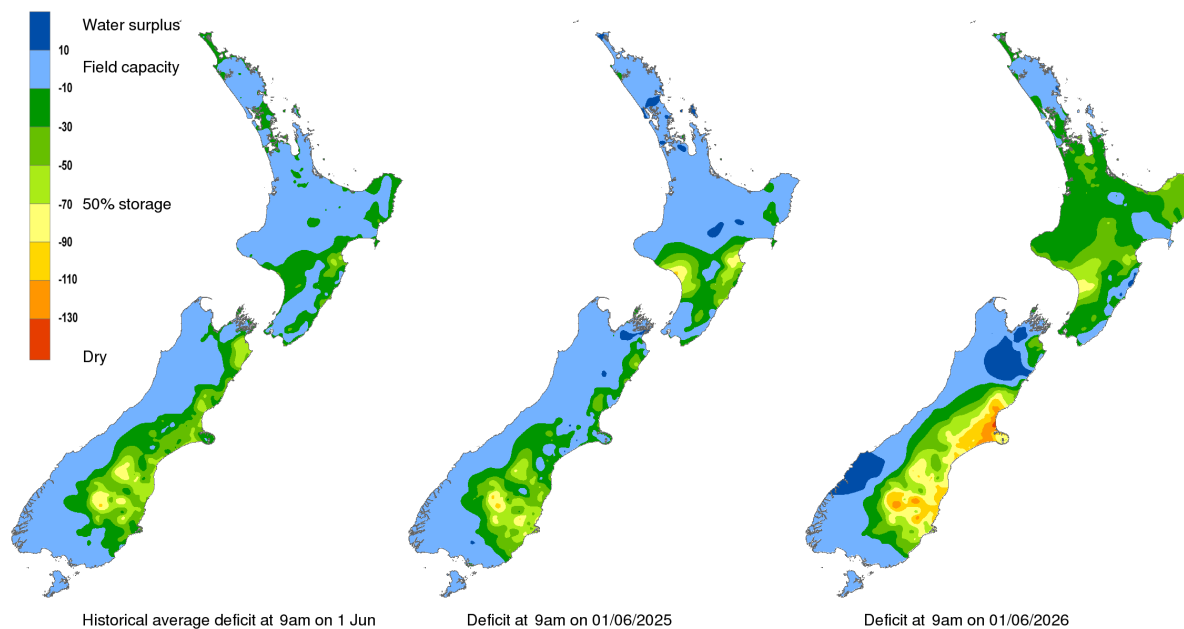
NIWA's [outlook summary](#) for the winter warns that the start of this month may not be indicative of what to expect as the season progresses, as air flow patterns shift around to the west/southwest. Western areas, especially in the South Island, may therefore experience more rainfall than usual, but all other regions should brace for a drier than usual winter. Again, early June may be different from the season as a whole, with heavy rain events possible. Soil moisture levels are likely to be below average. There may also be unusually windy conditions later in winter, with considerable temperature variability. Overall, temperatures should sit close to the historical mean. By the time winter is over, there is a 95% likelihood that El Niño conditions will be prevalent in New Zealand.

### *FAR weather tool*

The FAR online weather tool is a great way to track weather patterns and to compare the current season's conditions with those of previous years. There are also a number of tools available to help with predicting disease and pest pressure. You can check it out [here](#). Click on the link and select the weather station closest to you from the drop-down box at the top right of the screen. Please contact us if you have any queries about the tool, or suggestions on how to make it better.

**Soil moisture data:** see more from NIWA [here](#).

Soil moisture deficit (mm) at 9am on 01/06/2026



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