

April 2017 Mechanical Weeding Blog



With warmer weather and rising soil temperatures the weeds are growing rapidly. We had to hang fire with the initial weeding pass until the field was traversable without leaving wheelings or smearing. We waited for the first suitable warm and windy day which was Sunday 26th March (Mother's Day). We had to adjust plans slightly as the rows could no longer be distinguished by the Garford RoboCrop, partly due to the narrow 12.5cm row width that the field was drilled at and partly due to the high weed burden. It was therefore decided to run the Opico harrow weeder through the Garford RoboCrop, Combcut and Opico plots on this first weeding operation as a pre-treatment for the main weeding.



Adjusting the setting on the Opico harrow prior to the pre-weeding treatment

The TRP Rotanet was also given a first pass on this pre-treatment run but it was probably still slightly too wet for this machine and therefore this implement will be run again on the first weeding treatment.



The TRP Rotanet on the pre-treatment weeding

Due to the high weed burden both the Opico and the Rotanet were set on their most robust setting and the wheat seemed sufficiently well rooted to cope with this harsh action. The Opico was driven at 12 km/hr and the Rotanet at 20 km/hr forward speed. The difference in the forward speeds does influence the aggressiveness of the weeding operation and these speeds were set in line with the manufacturers recommendations, comfortable working speeds and operational effectiveness.





The first assessments are being taken from the plots looking at wheat, tiller and weed numbers per m². A biomass of wheat and weeds will then also be taken. This data will be useful later on to analyse the impact of weeding operations on plant survival rates.

The spring wheat for the weeding demonstrations for Mechanical Weeding LIVE was drilled on 30th March so it should be at a suitable growth stage for weeding ready for the event on 9th May.