

Chapter B2. Weed control

PURPOSE OF THIS CHAPTER

To provide an overview of weed control

CHAPTER CONTENTS

- weed control

ASSOCIATED CHAPTERS

- D7 'Cultivation and soil structure'

WEED CONTROL STRATEGY

In controlling weeds between crops, consider the effect on soil erosion and soil compaction. Use herbicides rather than tillage when the soil is wet. Tillage on dry soil at or above the plastic limit is permissible, but avoid creating finely tilled, bare, dry soil. Such a surface is very prone to erosion.

Wet soil

Herbicides are more effective when weeds are growing vigorously, as will happen in wet soil. The use of herbicides minimises the disturbance of wet soil and any consequent compaction and smearing.

However, when you are spraying on wet soil, you are likely to damage the soil structure due to wheel pressure.

Drive in wheel tracks you have already made. This limits soil compaction to a minimum area of the paddock.

Dry soil

Herbicides are not very effective when the soil is dry, because the weeds are not growing vigorously.

The timing of herbicide application is critical. Working the soil when it is dry is less likely to cause smearing or compaction.

Before tilling, check the moisture content of the soil well below the plough layer (say, at 30 cm, even though the tillage may not be that deep). Soil can appear dry on the surface, while remaining wet underneath. If so, tillage can cause compaction at depth.

