



organic farming technical summary

Minimising Leatherjacket Damage in Organic Cereals

OFTS5

Where damage occurs

- First year cereals after ploughing grass leys
- Grass reseeds, permanent grass, especially in:
 - high rainfall areas
 - poorly drained soils

Anticipation and avoidance

- In final year of ley, **graze down hard in August/September** to reduce egg-laying by crane fly
- Listen to SAC leatherjacket population forecasts in February/March
- Soil sample grass for leatherjackets before ploughing - then you know the risk
- **Plough ley in January**, at least two months before anticipated sowing date of cereals
 - Leatherjackets start feeding voraciously in March and die because of lack of food
 - More soil N is released giving higher grain yield, compared with later ploughing
- **If winter ploughing not possible**, and forecast is for high leatherjacket populations, **delay ploughing until late April/early May**

Control

- When forecast is for high populations,
 - cultivations reduce populations by about 50% so do an extra cultivation
 - roll seedbed with heavy roller immediately after sowing.
- Harrowing crop for weed control will help reduce leatherjackets.
- Observe cereal seedbed at night, during days immediately after sowing, before crop emerges: If leatherjackets present in large numbers, **use flame weeder at night** to destroy grubs (suitable for small areas only).
- Cover damaged patches with tarpaulin overnight after rain, collect grubs in morning and destroy (small areas only).

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