

Meta works when it's wet, says Lonza



Click on the image to download a high-res version, or go to <http://www.mistral-pr.co.uk/library/metaslugs.htm>

Meta-metaldehyde manufacturer Lonza has reinforced assurances that its active ingredient, the leading form of slug control, is highly effective in wet and cold conditions against the main slug species. But as the weather deteriorates, growers have been advised it is essential to use quality pellets.

“We understand that there may be some growers who have been told that slugs affected by metaldehyde can recover in wet conditions,”

comments Meta technical manager Markus Bieri. “Be in no doubt that they cannot. Provided you use quality Meta pellets, such as those from Certis or De Sangosse, you can be sure that they will kill their intended target, and only their intended target.”

Contrary to some press reports, Mr Bieri stresses that Meta-metaldehyde has no weaknesses against the Arion species of slug – the darker type that is more often a problem in potato crops. “In trials no difference could be found between control of Arion and Deroceras species – the most common, grey field slug – when using metaldehyde. In fact there’s evidence it performs better than alternatives if you use a high quality pellet.”

Having multiplied to vast populations over the damp summer, slugs, the number one arable pest, will put crops under immense pressure this winter, Mr Bieri warns. “The wet conditions are ideal for slugs to thrive and they will still be active when it’s cold. Conversely crop growth slows down, making lush new leaves vulnerable to attack.”

Peter Boyne, technical manager for pellet manufacturer Certis, advises growers to apply sufficient pellet numbers per square metre of a product that lasts during these cooler, damp and wet conditions. “This is important because slugs are indiscriminate feeders. So you must ensure that whatever food they come across first is a pellet,” he says.

It is vital that growers continue to monitor crops throughout the winter and reapply pellets at the first sign of damage, continues Mr Bieri. "But be sure to apply those that carry the Meta Quality logo – these are manufactured to a high standard that ensures they last for at least two weeks in the wet."

Proprietary and independent research has proven that slugs cannot recover, he adds. "When a slug feeds on a Meta pellet, its mucus-producing cells in the skin and the gut are irreversibly destroyed. This instantly causes the slug to stop feeding and it produces excess mucus, so its means of locomotion is disabled along with its skin protection. Contrary to some growers' opinion, even in wet weather those slugs do not recover."

Trials have also shown metaldehyde performs equally well if not better than alternatives in cold conditions. "As with all slug control ingredients, the lower the temperature the slower the active will take effect. But the extent and intensity resulting from a lethal dose are the same," reassures Mr Bieri.

Other research highlights that metaldehyde does not harm beneficial organisms, such as earthworms and carabid beetles, when used as directed. "Again trials data from years of research proves this to be the case. Of course efficacy from your choice of slug pellet is crucial, especially in a year like this one. But with the industry under constant public scrutiny, it is also worth demonstrating environmental responsibility, which is the added benefit Meta-metaldehyde offers."

All Certis and De Sangosse slug control products contain Meta-metaldehyde and are manufactured to Lonza's Minimum Quality Standards.

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***Because not all slug pellets
are the same***

Note to editors:

1. A selection of high-resolution photos is available at <http://www.mistral-pr.co.uk/library/metaslugs.htm>. This includes general slug photos, pictures of Markus Bieri and the Meta logo.
2. Lonza has set out minimum quality requirements (MQRs) for all manufacturers wishing to use its active ingredient. These cover aspects of manufacture and raw ingredient which ensure pellets spread well, are palatable and last in wet conditions. Only pellets that meet these standards can bear the Meta® logo, which in the UK are those made by Certis and De Sangosse. For more information, go to www.metaldehyde.com.
3. Research papers and other information that support assertions made in this release are available on request.

Further information:

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