



Millet (Agronomy Summary)

Millet is basically a large grassy crop, so the basic agronomy is similar to growing a field of spring sown ryegrass – the difference being that the millet is combined at the end of the season. It is a very cheap and simple crop to grow – with the only major threat to the crop coming from dry seedbeds at sowing time. Millet is very resistant to pests and diseases, so there are usually no major concerns over slugs, rabbits, pigeons etc – nor diseases. Millet is also popular as a break crop which can suppress blackgrass through natural competition, and we see many growers using the crop as a non-chemical blackgrass break.

Key Points

- Sow at ½ an inch into a warm bed from 1st May.
- Conserve moisture in the seedbed as best you can.
- No pre-emergence herbicide is used – all weed control is post-em.
- Apply 80 to 100 kg per Ha of Nitrogen – allowing for applications of FYM/Slurry/etc.
- No pesticides or fungicides or PGR's required.
- Very effective blackgrass suppression.
- Suits all land whether pure sand or heavy clay.
- Around the end of August – kill the crop off with glyphosate.
- Combine with a normal unmodified combine in mid-late September.

PHOSPHATE, POTASH & MAGNESIUM

Apply as follows:

Soil Index	0	1	2	3	4
Phosphate (Kg/Ha)	75	50	30	0	0
Potash (Kg/Ha)	100	50	30	0	0
Magnesium (Kg/Ha)	65	25	0	0	0
Sulphur (Kg/Ha)	65	45	25	0	0

Put into the seedbed or on top immediately after sowing

POST-EMERGENCE WEED CONTROL

Post-emergence herbicides are usually necessary.

Broadleaf control is usually achieved using Peak and / or Starane XL. Other options can be used.

FUNGICIDES

Usually None

DESICCATION

Normally the crop is desiccated with glyphosate

The best time for glyphosate in millet is when the heads are half-way brown and still green near the stem. Use a decent rate, use a wetter and apply at the correct time. The heads turn brown from the tip back, so the bit closest to the stem will remain green longest. Also - please don't spray roundup too soon – it will compromise yield and quality.

PROBLEMS

Experience has shown that dry seed beds are the only major threat to the success of millet crops. The good news is that the seed will grow off after one wet day, so it does not need a lot of moisture to get it going. Happily, millet does not suffer from any dramas at harvest time, it is easy to cut, dry and handle, and does not suffer from pests or diseases during the season, so 95% of the management is in getting it established.

Controlling grass weeds in millet is not really possible. We have been unable to identify a graminicide that will kill blackgrass / wild oats etc, that will not also kill the millet – having said this, the late sowing time and the very competitive canopy of millet usually means that grass weeds are not a major issue, and blackgrass is very effectively suppressed.

Millet volunteers can be easily controlled in following crops, and they will disappear after a couple of years.

SUMMARY

Millet is cheap, simple and easy to grow. It suits off-lying land that has issues with pests, and will weather a drought very well.