

## **Micro fertiliser gives OSR a 'mega' boost - and saves time and money**

Microgranular fertiliser can be an essential aid to oilseed rape establishment, especially under the very difficult conditions experienced this season, according to recent trial data. Placed with the seed rather than broadcast, it also saves a separate application.

With oilseed establishment patchy at best and up to 20% of OSR area warranting ripping up and starting again according to the HGCA, the need to establish deep rooted plants with good ground cover has seldom been more evident.

Sites monitored and assessed by independent research group SGS have demonstrated greater root mass and vigorous foliage where OSR crops had a low rate application of the microgranular fertiliser Umostart. In some cases the difference was dramatic, with root weight more than double that of untreated controls.

Three trials were set up using Osprey winter oilseed rape drilled in late September 2012. In two of the trials the rows were set at 50 cms and in the third at 12 cm. Application rates of Umostart, which has a composition of 11:50:0+1ZN, were 10 kg/ha and 25 kg/ha.

Samples were taken from the trial sites at intervals ranging from 36 - 52 days after drilling. These were subject to a range of assessments including root weight and length, top weight and leaf colour, thus giving a good indication of relative plant vigour.

Treated samples were more vigorous and better established in all cases, with two of the three trials indicating increased root weight of 126% and 117% for the samples drilled at 50 cm and 12 cm row widths respectively.

James Ward of Sipcaml, supplier of the microgranular fertiliser Umostart said:

“These trials support our observations in previous years when it has been apparent oilseed rape drilled with Umostart has got off to a stronger start. Once well established it is better able to withstand long winters like the one just experienced and survive pest attack.

“Growers using microgranular fertiliser have also been commenting on the practical advantages. Most were pressed for time in the autumn so for many, using this sort of fertiliser eliminated the need for a separate operation. Also, because such a small volume of fertiliser is required, they saved time transporting conventional products to the field. For growers using a Claydon drill or similar with a hopper for microgranules there is no need to broadcast fertiliser separately and large areas can be covered quickly and efficiently.

“For maximum uptake nutrients need to be available close to the root and this is especially true of phosphate. Placing tiny granules exactly where they are needed, close to the seed, improves availability, cuts wastage and the potential for nutrient loss and environmental damage through the drainage system in a wet year.

“In short it is more efficient for the plant, which gets off to a flying start and more efficient for the grower; both critical in a difficult season.”

