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Sowing time affects the abundance of pests and weeds in winter rye

Keywords *Oscinella frit*, *Mayetiola destructor*, weeds, crop establishment, winter rye, *Secale cereale*, Finland,

Abstract

Selection of an appropriate sowing time for some winter rye (*Secale cereale*) cultivars could reduce the need for crop protection measures. In this study the occurrence and status of pests and weeds in relation to sowing time and growth habit of winter rye was studied in southern Finland. This was done using three sowing times and four rye varieties in field trials conducted at three locations in 1999–2001. The early sown rye was severely affected by pests (*Oscinella frit*, *Mayetiola destructor*) and weeds, whereas postponing sowing for two weeks after the recommended sowing time in late August resulted in considerably less damage and the optimal establishment of crop stands. The German hybrid varieties Picasso and Esprit produced more tillers m⁻² in autumn than the Finnish varieties Anna and Bor 7068. However, the number of pests and weeds did not differ among rye varieties. Late sowing of rye should be considered to minimize the need for plant protection. If rye is sown at the recommended time it may still require insecticide treatments promptly in the autumn whereas herbicide treatment need not be determined until spring, after recording the winter mortality of weeds.

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