Slugs and Derrex® – a cereal problem?

A number of reports of slugs in cereal crops, especially wheat, have been received together with questions regarding the need to treat.

In wheat it is the flag leaf and the ear that contribute most to yield; thus if damage is evident to these areas of the plant it may be prudent to treat. Regular monitoring on warm damp evenings is the best time to assess slug populations.

There has been significant rainfall in the UK this summer which has prompted population development in slugs. Soils are waterlogged in many areas so care needs to be taken not to apply slug pellets unnecessarily. For this reason pellets based on ferric phosphate (Derrex®), when applications can be made, would be the preferred option. Ferric phosphate is practically insoluble so the risk of provoking incidents where the active substance is washed into water courses is significantly reduced compared to the other options.

Molluscicides based on ferric phosphate (Derrex®) may be used right up to the field edges and there is no harvest interval. It may not be necessary to treat the whole field and inspection of the crop will identify those areas requiring treatment.