The Most Commonly Made Technical Mistakes in Cultivating of Winter Rye

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Rye is a cultivated crop, the biological potential of which is currently the least exploited compared to other cereal varieties in Poland. Rye is extensively grown by the majority of Polish farmers. Compared to other cereal types, rye is more adaptable to different climate and location parameters, but poor production techniques detrimentally affect the cultivation reliability as well as the grain yield. The COBORU trials performed over recent years found that the achievable average rye yield could be roughly between 60 and 80 dt/ha. However in practice the average rye yield is 20 - 25 dt/ha. On the other hand, the agricultural enterprises advised by Hanse Agro are achieving grain yields of 48 - 62 dt/ha. This comparison shows that the majority of agricultural enterprises in Poland harbour a wealth of untapped potential. The low rye yields are often attributable to technical errors in the cultivation.

Here is a list of the most common mistakes in growing rye:

1. Rye is frequently cultivated within a monoculture arrangement or after cereals.
2. The soil usually remains neglected or poorly tilled before the rye is planted.
3. There is often a lack of awareness that rye too requires soil with an optimally regulated soil pH value and that it can suffer if this value is too negative.
4. Errors are made in relation to soil fertilisation. This usually concerns the lack of balance in fertilisation (particularly in less beneficial locations and following a particularly draining previous crop); added to that sometimes comes the poor timing of the fertilising operation.
5. Polish farmers pay far too little attention to good seed quality and often rely on out-dated varieties. Varieties are repeatedly cultivated year and year, and farmed-saved seed is frequently not disinfected.
6. Planting performed much too late and at excessive depths will exacerbate the effect of the aforementioned mistakes. This prevents the establishment of a good population of rye with yield potential. One method farmers use to attempt to rectify this situation is excessively increasingly the seed volume. This usually results in a crop that is much too dense and very difficult to manage.
7. The autumnal application of herbicide is often left out. It makes sense with widely developed crops for fungicide to be applied to counter snow mould.
8. The nitrogen fertiliser is not properly distributed. Fertilisation is frequently performed too late and with no regard paid to the growth dynamics and nutritional requirements of the crops.

9. The need for microelements is under-estimated – particularly in poorer locations.

10. Fungicides are often applied much too late or incorrect quantities are used.

11. With the use of growth regulators these are frequently applied at inappropriate times, the quantities are incorrectly measured and very often the wrong substance is used.

12. At harvest time, rye is usually treated in a Cinderella-like manner and is only harvested at the very end. This detrimentally affects its yield potential and grain quality.

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