



## AGRII WILDLIFE INFORMATION SHEET No.4

# Recognising two alien weed grasses

The UK has always had its share of invasive species be it flora or fauna. Some like the grey squirrel and Himalayan balsam are well know but due to its greater frequency there is increasing concern for two weed grasses often hidden in a range of plants sown in bird food mixes so they often go un-noticed.

## INTRODUCTION

The grasses in question go by many different English names Barn Yard Grass (*Echinochloa.spp.* Generally *Echinochloa crus-galli* or *Echinochloa frumentacea*) and Bristle Grass (*Setaria viridis*). Thought to generally come in continental supplies of such seeds as Millet or Sorghum. They are both annuals with prolific seed production. Selective control is possible in single species crops such as maize but thins get more complicated in multi species mixes.



### Barn Yard Grass (*Echinochloa.spp.*)

This grass responds reasonably to a range of graminicides but the problems start when it occurs in bird food mixes along with other graminacious species such as millet and cereals where selective control is limited and may not have approval.



### Bristle Grass (*Setaria viridis*.)

Like Barn yard grass this also responds to a range of graminicides but problems start when it occurs in bird food mixes with other grass species such as millet and cereals where selective control is limited and may not have label approval.



Don't be fooled... **Young Dwarf Sorghum**, looks very similar to Barn Yard and Bristle Grass and is often added to mixes for food and cover.



### Canary Grass

A once popular and persistent grass sown in game cover mixes. It is seldom sown now but can still crop up unexpectedly.



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# Thoughts on control

### Flower mixes

Annual grass weeds are easy to control in **perennial** flower or pollen and nectar mixes. Mow as often as necessary in the first year to reduce the seed set and competition from the annuals.

A first year pollen and nectar mix smothered by Barn yard grass and now overdue a cut.



### Bird food mixes

Cutting is not an option as it destroys the annual sown species. Bird food mixes contain a wide range of sown species making selective weed control difficult or impossible. A known weed problem may allow species to be selected that are tolerant to a specific herbicide. Some weeds provide seeds for birds but best if not at the expense of the sown species. Herbicides are a management tool and have a place but agreements and product labels must be followed. Weeds build up after a few years of sowing in the same place and eventually the site needs to be returned to cropping to be "cleaned up"



A clean multi species bird food mix. Repeated sowing in the same place builds up weed problems.

### Herbicides

The following does not represent any form of recommendation but may point to products worth investigating. Stewardship agreements require a minimum number of visible sown species and a derogation prior to treatment and product labels need to be followed at all times.

The following products may offer a degree of selective grass weed control with some sown species survival depending on the sown species.

**Cereal based**  
**Oskar, Atlantis.**

**Maize based**  
**Calaris, Calisto, Dual Gold, Maister, Sampson Extra.**

**Mixes containing cereals, Millet, Kale and Sorghum**  
Some damage may occur to some species but the following are worth checking:

**Crystal**  
Cereals, Millet, Sorghum, Kale some damage.

**Smelter/Dual Gold**  
Kale ok. Cereals and Sorghum some damage. Millet is killed.