

# Controlling Black Beetle

In the past few years we have noticed the emergence of African Black beetle as a pest in pastures in areas that have not traditionally had an issue. Damage from African black beetle is usually noticed in pastures from November to May. When looking at the larvae they have a smooth light brown to orange head and grow up to 25mm long. There are a number of tools available to control black beetle but their success will be determined by the correct use of each tool.

Endophytes are a fungus that is found naturally in ryegrass. Endophytes can produce a range of chemical compounds that can have a deterrent effect on particular insects therefore protecting the plant from insect predation. AR37, Endo5 and NEA2 can protect an existing ryegrass plant from African black beetle. However this protection only occurs once the plant is established. So how do you protect the plant while it is establishing. We can protect the emerging plant by using coated seed.

Using a seed coating like Goucho or Poncho Plus you are providing the emerging plant with protection until the endophyte can protect the plant. I would recommend sowing new pastures with goucho or poncho plus seed coating if you have had a heavy infestation of African black beetle in the previous season to give you protection in the early seedling stage. But what to do once the pasture is established?

The active ingredient Chlorpyrifos found in chemicals such as the newly released Cobalt and Lorsban have activity against African Black beetle in a number of cropping situations. Cobalt in particular can also be used to treat Red Legged Earth Mite, Lucerne Flea Black headed pasture cockchafer and also some aphids.

The use of some summer forages crops like brassicas can be a helpful tool to break the life cycle. By cultivating the paddock you are trying to destroy the larvae or at least bring them to the surface where chemical application is its most effective. Planting a winter turnip crop may be an option in a paddock with a severe infestation or the use of a resistant species such as lucerne may be applicable where growing conditions are appropriate.

Whatever way you are trying to deal with a problem like African Black Beetle be sure that an Agronomist is there to help you find the best way for your own individual situation.