

Both slugs and snails may be a pest to pulses. Slugs can attack germinating seeds before emergence and snails, particularly the small conical snail, *Cochicella barbara*, may attack seedlings as they emerge. If the slug or snail numbers are high they can lead to a virtual wipeout of the crop. Once the crop is established, slugs and snails generally do not cause severe damage, however if snails and slugs are present at harvest, pulse crops may be downgraded or in extreme cases written off as a complete loss. Slugs move into the soil in the day and emerge over night, feeding on the soil surface up until dawn. Slugs can eat several times their own weight in one night. Slug numbers tend to build up rapidly in wet seasons and tend to increase when the land has been used for pasture for several years. Cultivation reduces slug numbers and slug numbers may also be reduced by natural predators such as black shiny beetles called carabid beetles. Unfortunately carabid beetles are killed by broad spectrum insecticides including methiocarb and their numbers are reduced by cultivation and heavy grazing.

It is worthwhile checking slug numbers by setting slug traps. This will enable the grower to check which part of the paddock is most infected, and if it is necessary to bait all or just some of the paddock. Slug numbers tend to be higher in moister parts of the paddock and lower on any ridges. Simple slug traps can be made by cutting a masonite piece about 30 x30cms, drilling a hole in the centre and securing it to the soil by means of a steel tent peg. It is important that the smooth surface is in contact with the soil and there is good soil - trap contact. Putting a small amount of chicken pellets under the trap will help attract the slugs to the trap. The trap should be checked pre- dawn. If there are two slugs or more under the trap then **ERADICATE** Snail and Slug Killer should be used to reduce numbers. It is important to apply slug baits several days before sowing. Baits are most likely to be eaten when there is little alternative feed. If slug numbers are high it is possibly better to bait at half the chosen application rate 4 to 5 days before sowing, and to apply a second treatment again at half rate at emergence or soon after.

If snails or slugs are a problem it is best to apply **ERADICATE** pre-emergence. If snails are still a problem as harvest approaches and the soil is moist a second treatment can be made. There is no withholding period for **ERADICATE** but, of course it would be preferable not to apply too late so that pellets are harvested with the crop. The small conical snail does not aestivate as readily as the other white snails, so if the soil is moist they are likely to be feeding on the soil surface.

ERADICATE should be applied at a rate of 5 kg/ha for light infestations up to 15 kg/ha for heavy infestations. To be effective the soil needs to be moist but if very heavy rain is expected it is advisable to delay treatment until after the storm has passed.

For further information on snails and slugs control consult the **ERADICATE** website.



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