

INTER-ROW CULTIVATION FOR BLACK-GRASS CONTROL

Searching for new tools and techniques to work alongside herbicides has driven innovation in recent years. The camera-guided inter-row cultivator is a key example of this, and a piece of technology that is widely available. NIAB has been focusing on this direction of travel for several years, using black-grass as the main target. Evidence so far indicates that it has the potential to be a key component of weed management in the future.

Understanding the costs involved with migrating to new techniques will become a priority, particularly as these tools are specialist and additional uses are limited. Inter-row cultivation does require some additional capital investment, however the operating costs are low, which makes for a very attractive offering. When using herbicides growers are operating under the law of diminishing returns, where the benefit gained reduces for every additional £ spent. In this context, inter-row cultivation, which might cost just £15/ha is four times cheaper than achieving that additional control with herbicides.

Figure 1. The Garford Robocrop set up for inter-row cultivation



Figure 2. The reduction in black-grass heads by integrating inter-row cultivation into a weed management programme. A combination provides the most robust control

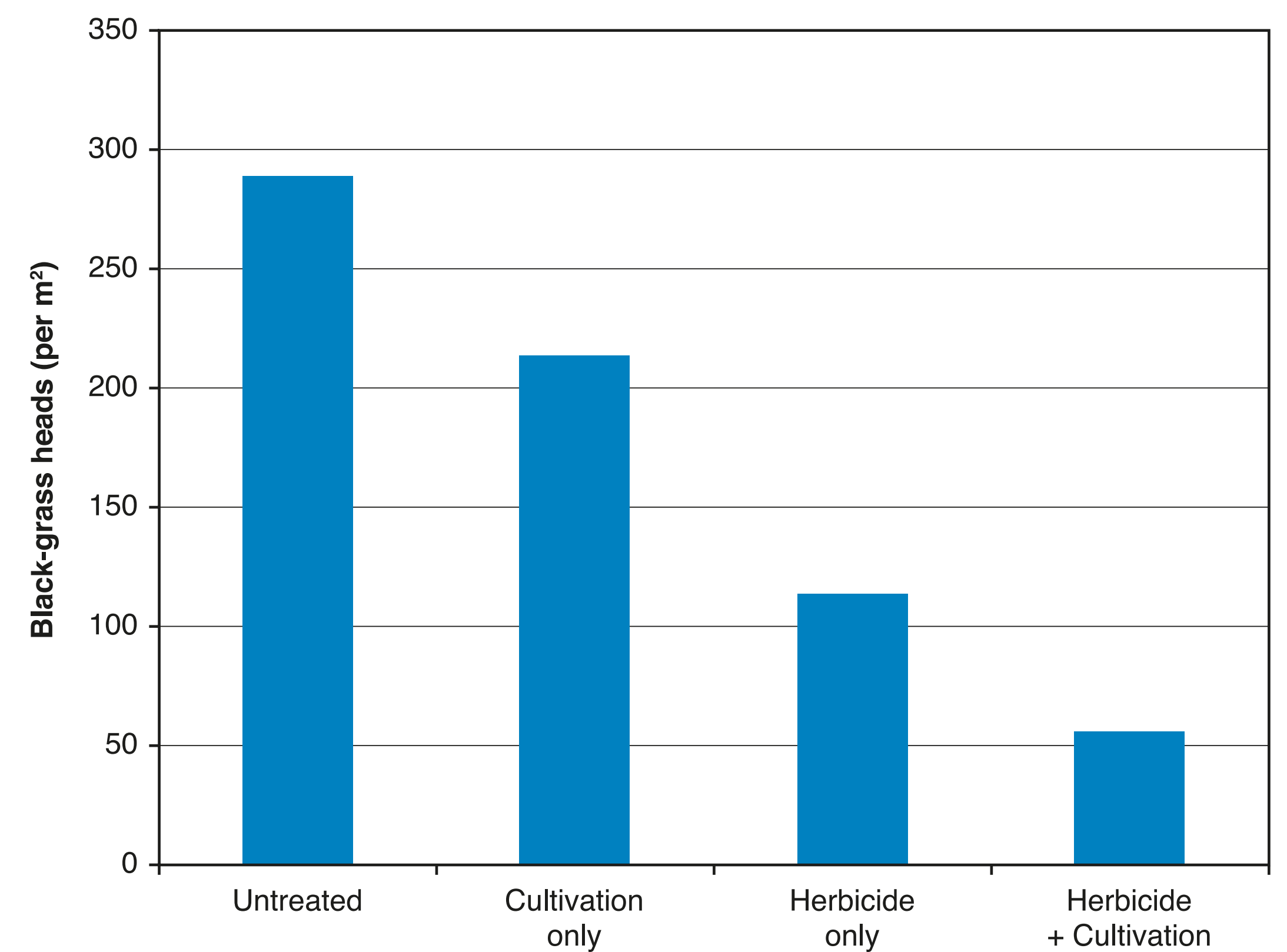


Figure 3. Cost effectiveness

