



## RAISING THE MOISTURE CONTENT OF OILSEED RAPE

We have all received reports of very low moisture content in oilseed rape; figures of 3% moisture having been mentioned. Oilseed rape at this low moisture levels presents two problems for the grower:

### 1. COMBINING

Very low moisture oilseed rape is extremely susceptible to pod shatter. It is quite possible for a large proportion of the oilseed rape to shatter seconds before being combined – thus producing large pre-combine seed losses.

The only alternative for the grower is to combine the crop very late into the evening or very early in the morning – when the dew has settled – thus reducing the risk of pod shatter.

### 2. REJECTED SEED

It is well known that mills will reject seed testing less than 6% moisture. The grower must decide if he wishes the seed to be delivered to a store for blending, or whether he feels confident to add water to the crop on-farm. The addition of water is perfectly acceptable, but the process must be thought through very carefully. To merely throw water on to a trailer as it arrives at the store will have minimal effect. Surface tension will result in virtually all the water falling through and draining out of the trailer.

To achieve success, the water must be added in a fine spray to the bottom of an auger whilst the oilseed rape is passing through. The action of the auger flight smears the water on to the coat of the oilseed rape, allowing uptake to occur. Once water has been applied, the oilseed rape should be left to stand for at least two hours to allow migration of the water into the centre of the seed. After this lapse of time, moisture testing should take place, in order to ascertain the precise effect.

The amount of water to be added to raise moisture content to 7% is tabled below. Measurements given are in litres per tonne:

Moisture Content pre-water Treatment %	Litres of Water to be Added per Tonne to raise Moisture Level to 7%
3.0	42.7
3.5	37.4
4.0	32.0
4.5	26.6
5.0	21.3
5.5	15.09
6.0	10.5

- Silsoe College has agreed the above figures are correct.
- Flow Meters can be purchased from: C A Platon  
Basingstoke Tel: 01256 470456
- Meter type is “Ball in Tapered Glass Tube”