



# Deer repellent Trico: two-year review

On a recent visit to a field trial, I passed a plantation of 40,000 conifers, all of which had been lost to deer who had identified a recently cut hole in the deer fencing. Proof, if needed, for the need of effective deer control. Currently, deer fencing aided by the rifle is the default system to avoid deer damage as while deterrent sprays have been available, past experience has not been particularly positive, largely due to the lack of rainfastness, leading to short persistence.

Therefore, to assess claims that Trico is effective for six months, a dozen foresters were contacted to discuss the performance of the product, with their comments summarised below.

Trico is based on emulsified sheep fat which deer will avoid as they find the smell and taste totally unappetising. Developed in Austria and widely used throughout Europe, Trico was introduced to the UK in 2017. It is sprayed by knapsack sprayer neat onto the tops of transplants at a rate of between 5 to 10ml per tree depending on the size of the tree, typically using an E80.02 nozzle at 1 bar pressure. It should be noted, though, that it does not deter rabbits, hares, voles and other biting or browsing creatures.

And the overall response in discussion with foresters is very positive, as it does appear to be lasting for around six months and is showing good activity against red, roe, fallow, sika and muntjac deer on a wide range of establishing trees including Sitka, Norway spruce, Douglas fir and a wide range of broadleaved species. But note that any treatment applied before flushing will mean that new growth will be unprotected.

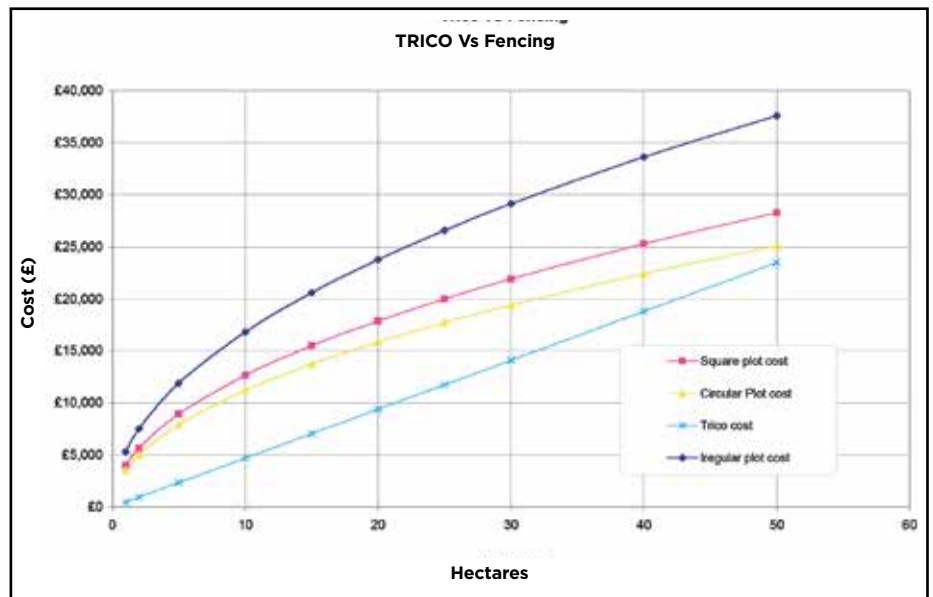


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As an alternative to treating all transplants, a barrier spray of three to four trees around the perimeter of the coup has also been found to be effective, although one report did record a small number of the barrier sprayed trees being nibbled. Any deer inside the barrier, will, of course, be trapped.

The survey included two of our larger estates, 4000ha of forestry in Scotland, and 1300ha in England, both of which are pre-treating cell grown plants prior to planting, either in trays or loose in bundles.

Treating the plants in trays was very



straightforward, with 1000ml product applied over trays of 150 trees using a small compression knapsack sprayer. The trays were then kept under cover for 48 hours to allow the material to dry on the foliage.

Treating bundles of cell grown or bare root transplants is not so simple, as the plants do need to be lined out side-by-side on polythene sheeting before spraying the foliage, ensuring that no material is sprayed on the roots as this will prevent moisture and nutrient uptake. A period of time to allow drying will then be necessary before re-bagging, a compromise between the foliage drying - but not the roots.

Dipping loosened bundles is less practicable as once dry, the transplants would be effectively glued together by their foliage.

On a micro scale, the treatment is also transforming a small 2ha woodland in Cumbria. Owner Tony Graham sprayed emerging natural regeneration of oak, beech, birch and wild cherry which previously would have been grazed out by roe deer, but are now thriving 1m plants.

The same grower has also sprayed the tops of 0.6m tubes placed over regen. and commented that the emerging foliage has also been avoided by the resident roe deer population.

Other respondents have found that treated emerged growth from tubes is also protected.

But how do the economics stack up against fencing?

There are a lot of variables here, with fencing possibly as low as £8/m on an easy access new lowland site, to up to £12/m on a difficult upland restock site. Much will also

depend on the size and shape of the fenced area, whether all trees are treated, or just a barrier, and the cost of Trico per transplant - 5p to 10p per transplant depending on the area of foliage treated.

The suppliers suggest that at a cost of £10/l and 10ml/tree, with all trees treated, (excluding application costs of around 5p/tree) then Trico treatment is less expensive than fencing on restock sites below 40 - 80 ha. The calculation would, of course be different on new plantings where a fencing grant may be gained.

As a contrast, a separate calculation by one large estate indicated that the cost of fencing a 25ha restock site (3000m) would be between £31,000 and £37,000. This compared to a single post planting 25ha application of Trico to 1650 trees/ha at £4000 and £6000 including application.

*Trico is available direct from the UK licence holder Laronkarn, 01684 899306.*



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**Pesticides helpline**

Pesticides helpline is a free service operated by Confor's crop protection adviser Colin Palmer on behalf of Confor members. Colin can be contacted 8am to 8pm Mondays to Fridays on 01531 633500 (leave a message if necessary) or by email to: [branchline@xln.co.uk](mailto:branchline@xln.co.uk)