

NOTE

This is the fourth harvest report of the 2024/25 season and covers from 29 August to 11 September 2024, which are the eighth and ninth weeks of a 'typical' harvest period. It is produced with data collected by The Andersons Centre and compiled by AHDB. Due to the change in data provider, the approach used varies slightly from previous years. The information is based on a sample survey of farmers in the United Kingdom (including Northern Ireland) and will provide figures on harvest progress throughout the harvest season.

For some crops, harvest is still at an earlier stage than others. For these crops, early yield and quality data will likely be skewed to those regions where more harvesting has taken place; they should not be considered representative of the whole country.

Please note that these harvest progress reports are separate from AHDB's Recommended Lists harvest data, which includes results from their variety trials.

Grain and seed yields from early harvested crops are based on farmer reported yields. The percentage deviation between the farmers' reported yield and the five-year average is applied to the regional five-year average quoted by Defra. Yields have been adjusted where moisture is above 14.5% for cereals and 8% for oilseed rape. Moisture levels below 14.5% and 8% have not been adjusted.

OVERVIEW

Harvest progress has slowed down over the past two weeks as rain and humid conditions have led to stop-start progress. The focus will now be on preserving quality in later harvested crops. Straw from later cut crops will also be lying wet where it has not been chopped or removed.

Many have now completed cereal and oilseed harvesting in England, with some areas of spring oats, spring barley and beans remaining to be cut. In Scotland, progress has centred on spring barley, with growers looking to preserve quality, while progress for wheat and oats has been much slower.

The wheat harvest is now largely complete across England and Wales, with the majority concluding in the week ending 4 September. However, in Scotland the wheat harvest is just 16% complete, having only progressed by 3 percentage points over the past week.

Yields continue to be reported below average across cereals and oilseed rape. But it is evident just how variable yields are from region-to-region, farm-to-farm and field-to-field. This is not overly surprising given the weather which we've seen but the larger drop in yields seen for some businesses will pose significant cash flow challenges.

Ergot is a significant challenge with this year's harvest and this needs to be managed accordingly. A [recent AHDB analysis](#) looked at indicative cleaning costs. There are also generally high levels of grass weeds and volunteer cereals within crops.

WINTER BARLEY

Harvest update

The winter barley harvest was completed in the week ending 21 August (week 6 of a typical harvest period). More detail is available in previous reports.

Yields

The final estimate of winter barley yields from this survey is 6.13t/ha, a 13% decline on the five-year average yield across the UK. There was significant deviation in yields between regions.

Quality

Winter malting barley quality is good. Although there have been some lower bushel weights and subsequently lower screenings (retentions on a 2.25 mm sieve), merchants report that the crop is very usable for the domestic market.

Specific weight – Specific weights ranged from 59 – 72 kg/hl, with an average of 64 kg/hl.

Screenings – Screening retentions (on a 2.25 mm sieve) for winter barley are averaging 88% but with a range of 85-98%.

Grain nitrogen (for malting varieties) – Nitrogen levels within winter malting barley have averaged 1.5%, which is low for winter malting barley.

Moisture – The average moisture observed across the UK was 14.2%.

Germination – There are no reported problems with germination in the winter malting crop, with almost all of the crop above 98%.

WINTER OILSEED RAPE

Harvest update

The winter oilseed rape (WOSR) harvest was completed by 28 August. More detail is available in previous reports.

Yields

The final data from this survey indicates yields are down 7% across the UK, at an average of 2.97t/ha. This is a slight decline from the previous report (3.00t/ha). Yield declines this season are not entirely due to pest pressure, although pressure was high. Anecdotally there have also been challenges with clubroot. Conversations with the wider industry suggest that yields across a broader acreage than this survey may be slightly closer to the five-year average.

Quality

Oil content – The average oil content is reported to be 45%, with very few samples below 44%. While part of the driver of low yields has been smaller seed sizes, this has not impacted oil content.

Moisture – Moisture levels for oilseed rape varied from 6.7% in the East to 10% in the South East.

OATS

Harvest update

The winter oat harvest in England and Wales is now complete, while spring oats are still being harvested. Progress is slow in Scotland with just 16% of oats cut by 11 September, up just 8 percentage points from a fortnight ago and well behind the pace of recent years. In Northern Ireland the oat harvest is 44% complete.

By 11 September, 82% of the national oat crop had been cut, up from 61% a fortnight ago. Progress has now slipped behind last year when 91% had been harvested, and the five-year average of 85% complete.

Yields

Oat yields have been variable across the UK and also between winter and spring oats. On average the yield of oats is down 7%, at 5.07t/ha, however this is not weighted by variety. The largest yield declines in oats are reported in the East Midlands where yields are reported to be down 14%. Yields are reportedly up in Wales (+18%) and in the South West (+1%).

Quality

Winter oat quality so far has been good, and most samples are of milling specification. Samples are still being analysed for spring oats, but generally the indications so far are also positive.

Specific weight – Specific weights have averaged 53 kg/hl so far, with samples bold and of good colour.

Moisture – Moisture content is now averaging 14.6% for all crops harvested to date, with typical regional values ranging from 14.0% to 16.5%.

WHEAT

Harvest update

The wheat harvest in the UK is 95% complete in the week ending 11 September, up from 88% complete by 28 August. This is now similar to last year's pace (96% complete) and the five-year average (93% complete).

The wheat harvest is reported as complete in all regions apart from Scotland. Progress with wheat harvesting in Scotland has been delayed by rainfall and fog, resulting in increased grain moisture. The wheat harvest in Scotland is 16% complete, having progressed by just 4 percentage points since the last report and 3 percentage points in the past week (5 – 11 September).

Yields

Yields in the UK remain down 8% on the five-year average averaging 7.42t/ha. Lower yields are reported in all regions except the Eastern region, where yields slightly above the five-year average were observed.

Variability of yields is a significant challenge and makes reporting averages difficult. Some growers have managed to produce high yields given the circumstances, but many have seen significant drops.

Quality

Protein contents remain low, though the information on other characteristics is more positive so far.

Specific weight – The specific weight of milling samples has been encouraging, averaging 76 – 78kg/hl. Some feed samples have exceeded 80kg/hl.

Hagberg Falling Number (HFN) – There are no problems reported with Hagberg Falling Numbers, although this is unsurprising given the dry conditions during much of the harvest period in England. Given rainfall in Scotland lower HFNs may be reported in due course as quality is assessed.

Protein – UK Flour Millers Group 1 samples have averaged generally 11.5% to 12%, though some samples have exceeded 13%. Anecdotally, the crop will be manageable and there are reports of high volumes of imports of high protein wheat to blend with lower protein UK samples.

Moisture – The average moisture level observed across the UK so far is 15.3%.

SPRING BARLEY

Harvest update

The spring barley harvest is 79% complete in the UK, as of 11 September. This is up 46 percentage points since the previous report (28 August), though behind the average pace for the time of year (83% complete).

Harvest of the crop is now completed in many regions in England, though there remains 19% to be cut in the West Midlands and North West. In Scotland, harvesting of spring barley is 50% complete, up from 4% a fortnight ago. Also, there's been little progress made over the past fortnight in Wales and Northern Ireland.

Yields

Yields of spring barley have increased since the last report and are now reported to be down 4% on the five-year average. The average yield in the UK is 5.67t/ha. This is expected to rise with the inclusion of further results from Scotland in the coming weeks.

Quality

The spring malting barley samples seen so far have been particularly good, though this will need to be monitored with harvest ongoing.

Specific weight – Specific weights are currently averaging 65 kg/hl. Grains are generally a good size, with specific weights higher than those of winter malting varieties.

Screenings – Very good levels are reported, with retentions on a 2.25 mm sieve in excess of 95%.

Grain nitrogen (for malting varieties) – Nitrogen content has averaged 1.45%, with samples ranging from 1.2% to 1.9%. Samples at the high end for Nitrogen are few and far between, with the majority of samples in the 1.2% to 1.6% range. This may cause challenges where exports are based on minimum nitrogen specification, with most UK samples falling below this threshold.

Moisture – So far moisture levels are averaging 16.5%. This is up from 15.5% in the previous report, with higher moisture contents being reported as more crops are harvested further North and during intermittent rainfall.

Germination – Early assessments suggest germination is in excess of 98%.

PULSES

The pulse harvest remains 57% complete on average across the regions which have farms reporting on pulse progress. This excludes Scotland, the North East, the South West of England and Northern Ireland. This is reflective of the completion of winter pulse harvesting for those reporting, and delays to the start of spring pulse harvesting. In many cases, growers are waiting for spring beans to be ready for harvest.

Given the lack of regional yields published on pulses, it is not possible to estimate a national average yield based on the data collected through this survey. There is a wide range of results reported, with yields anywhere from 10% down on average to 72% up. These results are based on a small hectareage, and not weighted.

STRAW

Straw production has anecdotally been variable from farm-to-farm, reflecting the patchiness of crops (especially winter crops) this season.

That said, there are reports of good volumes of straw in various regions and across crops throughout the UK. Straw yields ranging from 3.5-4.5t/ha have been quoted by some but will not be reflective of all. Good straw yields are welcomed by many, especially where yields of grain have been poor.

The [price of straw](#) has declined significantly in recent weeks, a reflection of an increased availability of straw. This may also reflect more choosing to bale straw in response to higher prices this year.

Oat straw is proving to be a challenge this year, taking longer than wheat and barley straw to dry.