

INTRODUCTION

The tables below show the 2025/26 AHDB Early Balance Sheet estimates of wheat and barley. These estimates provide the first look at wheat and barley supply and demand for the season.

The drop in estimated imports outweighs the rise in production and decrease in total domestic consumption, leading to a tighter wheat balance sheet in 2025/26.

Similarly for barley, the drop in availability (driven by a fall in production), outweighs the drop in consumption, leading to a much tighter balance sheet in 2025/26.

WHEAT

Total availability of wheat in 2025/26 is estimated at 16.017 Mt, down 957 Kt on the year, driven by lower opening stocks and imports, outweighing a rise in production.

2025/26 opening stocks are estimated at 1.980 Mt, down 780 Kt on the year. 2025 UK wheat production* is estimated at 11.836 Mt, up 691 Kt year on year. An increase in planted area has outweighed a very mixed year for yields across the UK. While up on the year, output remains below the previous five-year average of 12.862 Mt. Following last season's record level of imports, **wheat imports in 2025/26 are initially estimated at 2.200 Mt, down 868 Kt from 2024/25.** Imports of high specification milling wheat are expected to fall back this season, given the relatively good functionality and higher protein levels of the domestic crop.

Total domestic consumption of wheat in 2025/26 is estimated to fall 340 Kt on the year to 13.939 Mt, with a drop in human and industrial (H&I) usage outweighing a rise in animal feed consumption.

H&I wheat usage is estimated at 6.652 Mt in 2025/26, down 476 Kt or 7% from 2024/25 levels. If realised, this would be the second lowest (behind 2020/21) volume used by the H&I sector since 2006/07.

The fall on the year is largely driven by a drop in demand by the bioethanol sector. With an extremely difficult operating environment, following the securing of the UK-US trade deal, the UK's two major bioethanol plants, Vivergo and Ensus have faced immense pressure. Subsequently, Vivergo shut down operations in August 2025, with Ensus yet to get back up and running following its usual maintenance break in September. In the absence of government incentives for domestic bioethanol production, as yet, it is assumed for these balance sheets that Ensus will remain out of operation too for the remainder of the 2025/26 season. Bioethanol demand will be monitored closely throughout the season, whilst ongoing discussions between the industry and government are taking place.

Brewing, malting and distilling (BMD) wheat usage is expected to be relatively stable on the year, while usage by flour millers is expected to be slightly down from 2024/25 levels. So far this season (Jul-Aug), wheat usage by flour millers has been somewhat subdued, with that trend expected to remain for the rest of the season. While this is partly driven by a slight decline in flour production, extraction rates are also expected to be better this season, leading to a slight reduction in usage. Despite the adverse weather in the spring and summer, the functionality and protein of the domestic milling wheat crop is reportedly good. Therefore, it is expected that the proportion of home-grown wheat in the grist this season will return closer to more typical levels, and the imported proportion will decrease.

In 2025/26, wheat usage in animal feed is estimated at 6.969 Mt, 133 Kt higher than levels recorded in 2024/25. While GB compound feed production is expected to remain relatively stable this season, cereal inclusion rates are projected to recover somewhat from last season, due to relative price and availability. Furthermore, the proportion of wheat used in rations is expected to be higher this season compared with 2024/25, displacing some maize from diets. Production of integrated poultry unit feed is also expected to be higher on the year, driven by improved prospects for the poultry sector. The amount of wheat fed on farm is currently expected to remain unchanged on the year.

With the drop in availability outweighing the fall in total domestic consumption, **the balance of wheat supply and demand in 2025/26 is estimated to fall 617 Kt from 2024/25 levels, to 2.078 Mt.** Taking into account an operating stock requirement of 1.500 Mt (-50Kt year on year), this leaves a **surplus available for either export or free stock of 578 Kt, 52 Kt lower than levels recorded in 2024/25.**

BARLEY

In 2025/26, total availability of barley is estimated at 7.928 Mt, 559 Kt down year on year, driven by a smaller crop outweighing a rise in opening stocks.

2025/26 barley opening stocks are estimated at 1.279 Mt, 116 Kt up year on year and 117 Kt higher than the previous five-year average. With a smaller planted area this season and very mixed yields, **UK barley production* is estimated to fall 652 Kt from 2024 levels to 6.439 Mt,** which is the smallest UK barley crop since 2012/13.

Total domestic consumption of barley in 2025/26 is estimated at 6.227 Mt, down 275 Kt from 2024/25. The fall in usage is largely driven by a decline in fed on farm as well as H&I consumption.

H&I barley usage is expected to decline by 77 Kt on the year to 1.721 Mt in 2025/26. The current 'cost of living crisis' is continuing to impact the consumption of alcohol domestically, which is influencing demand from the BMD sectors. BMD barley demand is expected to be somewhat sluggish once again this season. The functionality of the 2025 barley crop is reportedly very mixed and regional. While there is a smaller pool of the 2025 crop expected to be meeting specification, supply is expected to be adequate for the somewhat dwindling demand.

In 2025/26 barley usage in animal feed is estimated to decrease by 195 Kt to 4.300 Mt, driven by an expected drop in fed on farm consumption outweighing a rise in usage by compounders. Feed barley is pricing competitively against other feed grains at the moment and is expected to displace wheat in some rations (albeit wheat is expected to steal some demand from maize). Given the smaller size of the domestic barley crop, it is projected that the amount fed on farm will come down slightly this season, simply because there is less barley available to feed on farm.

The balance of barley supply and demand in 2025/26 is estimated at 1.701 Mt, down 284 Kt on the year and 19% lower than the previous five-year average. The estimated operating stock requirement remains unchanged on the year at 800 Kt, leaving a **surplus available for either export or free stock of 901 Kt.**

NOTES

This document provides commentary on the annual AHDB Early Balance Sheets for UK wheat and barley, for the 2025/26 marketing season. These balance sheets are designed to provide the industry with information on the UK supply and demand position ahead of the first official UK Cereals Supply and Demand Estimates, due to be published 27 November 2025. Comparisons are with both official survey figures, and the 2024/25 end-season supply and demand estimates. As always, caution should be taken when examining these figures at such an early stage of the season.

*Provisional UK cereal and oilseed production estimates for 2025, due to reduced data availability from UK regions. Official provisional estimates are for England and Scotland only. Following Defra's methodology from when a UK provisional figure was last released in 2021, the AHDB have assumed no change for Wales and Northern Ireland area and production figures from 2024. These have been combined with the provisional England and Scotland production figures to produce UK wheat and barley production estimates for the AHDB Early Balance Sheets. Production for previous seasons is based on the results from the [Defra Cereals and Oilseed Rape Production survey](#).

AHDB EARLY CEREAL SUPPLY AND DEMAND BALANCE SHEETS 2025/26

July to June crop years

Thousand tonnes

	Wheat					Barley				
	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Change on 2024/25	% Change on 2024/25	2023/24	2024/25	2025/26	Change on 2024/25	% Change on 2024/25
Opening Stocks	1,953	2,760	1,980	-780	-28%	1,268	1,163	1,279	116	10%
Production	13,980	11,146	11,836	691	6%	6,963	7,091	6,439	-652	-9%
Imports	2,437	3,068	2,200	-868	-28%	201	233	210	-23	-10%
Availability	18,369	16,974	16,017	-957	-6%	8,433	8,487	7,928	-559	-7%
Human and Industrial Consumption	7,520	7,128	6,652	-476	-7%	1,910	1,798	1,721	-77	-4%
<i>of which home grown</i>	6,339	5,514	5,526	12	0%	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a	n/a
Animal Feed Consumption	7,135	6,837	6,969	133	2%	4,186	4,495	4,300	-195	-4%
Seed	237	258	258	-	-	192	174	174	-	-
Other	70	56	59	3	5%	35	35	32	-3	-9%
Domestic Consumption	14,962	14,279	13,939	-340	-2%	6,323	6,501	6,227	-275	-4%
Balance	3,407	2,695	2,078	-617	-23%	2,111	1,985	1,701	-284	-14%
Exports ²	258	199	-	*	*	780	707	-	*	*
Intervention Stocks ²	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Commercial End-Season Stocks ²	2,760	1,980	-	*	*	1,163	1,279	-	*	*
<i>of which Estimated Operating Stocks Requirement ³</i>	<i>1,500</i>	<i>1,550</i>	<i>1,500</i>	<i>-50</i>	<i>-3%</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>800</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>-</i>
<i>of which Free Stocks ⁴</i>	<i>1,260</i>	<i>430</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>*</i>	<i>*</i>	<i>363</i>	<i>479</i>	<i>-</i>	<i>*</i>	<i>*</i>
Surplus available for either export or free stock	1,518	630	578	-52	-8%	1,142	1,185	901	-284	-24%
Residual	389	515				168				

Source: AHDB, Defra

These balance sheets have been produced by AHDB. The balance sheets should be viewed in conjunction with the official UK Cereals Supply and Demand Balance Sheets . The first official 2025/26 balance sheets are due to be released on 27 November 2025.

These are revised during the year. Figures rounded to the nearest 1000 tonnes. Due to rounding, totals may not agree with the sum of the individual items.

1. Forecast using best information available as at 23 October 2025

2. Split of exports, intervention and total commercial end-season stocks only published for historical seasons

3. This is a calculated estimate of the minimum tonnage that users of grain require to get through to a point at which new crop can be utilised

Estimated Operating Stocks Requirement calculated as shown [here](#)

4. Free Stocks are those available after exports and operating stocks have been fulfilled; these will be estimated later in the season when stocks survey data is available

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