

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

After a largely dry April, welcome rain was seen in early May. However, this was patchy overall for most. From the 17 May onwards, above average rainfall was recorded for the UK, with the exception of the Eastern region. The rain has helped to retain good yield potential in winter crops, and was essential for spring crops, facilitating nitrogen uptake. On the lightest land in the East Midlands and the East, farmers with access to irrigation equipment and available water have opted to irrigate cereal crops where water stress was showing, or to support the establishment of spring crops. All spring crops have now been planted, with a small area sown in May.

However, the recent rain has also led to an increase in weed growth. Many grassweeds are now visible above crop canopies, including blackgrass, Italian ryegrass, brome and wild oats. Patch spraying is now underway for blackgrass with glyphosate, ahead of the 1 June cut-off date for effective control. Additionally, proactive Italian ryegrass control is in progress, to reduce Italian ryegrass induced lodging.

The above average temperatures recorded during May have led to an increase in cereal aphids observed by the Rothamsted Insect Survey. Grain and rose grain aphids have also been recorded. However, all are still currently under the threshold for insecticide treatment.

Farmers are continuing to deal with the uncertainty of current and future grain prices. Input costs remain a headache, with high prices and high output costs. New season nitrogen prices were released earlier in the month, initially pricing at c.£630/t and selling out within hours. The following price release then saw nitrogen values lifted to c.£715/t.

## CROP CONDITION

Crop condition was assessed using the USDA approach. This classifies crops into one of five categories (see details below). The values are given as a percentage of the GB crop planted area for that crop, that fall into each of the categories – regional condition scores are available on the [AHDB website](#).

### Crop condition definitions:

- Very poor:** Extreme degree of loss to yield potential, complete or near crop failure
- Poor:** Heavy degree of loss to yield potential, which can be caused by excess soil moisture, drought, disease etc.
- Fair:** Less than normal crop condition. Yield loss is a possibility, but the extent is unknown
- Good:** Yield prospects are normal. Moisture levels are adequate and disease, insect damage and weed pressure are minor
- Excellent:** Yield prospects are above normal. Crops are experiencing little or no stress. Disease, insect damage and weed pressures are insignificant

	Very Poor	Poor	Fair	Good	Excellent	Crops not yet emerged
Winter Wheat	1%	2%	14%	64%	18%	0%
Winter Barley	1%	2%	16%	64%	18%	0%
Winter Oats	1%	2%	12%	73%	14%	0%
Winter OSR	2%	4%	23%	51%	19%	0%
Spring Wheat	2%	6%	20%	68%	5%	0%
Spring Barley	1%	2%	20%	73%	5%	0%
Spring Oats	1%	3%	21%	72%	3%	0%
Spring OSR	2%	6%	24%	60%	3%	5%

Source: RSK ADAS

Note: Figures may not sum to 100% due to rounding

## WHEAT

### Crop establishment

Crops are now growing rapidly in response to the warmth and moisture. Growth stages as at 23 May range from flag leaf fully emerged (GS39) to ears emerging (GS55). An earlier than normal appearance of GS39 has been seen by some.

There have been reports of patches of BYDV being seen in crops. In general, the levels of infection have been relatively low. Yellow rust remains an issue in some crops across the country.

Where conditions were dry for the first PGR application, a small proportion of farmers skipped applications. However, following recent rain, second timing (up to GS39) applications were going ahead as planned. PGR requirements have been assessed on a field-by-field basis, when considering lodging risk.

### Nutrition

All P&K applications are now complete. Main nitrogen applications are also finished now. Farmers growing milling wheat have been evaluating the need for foliar nitrogen applications, in order to achieve protein requirements.

### Weed pressure

Overall, the level of broadleaved weed control has been good, with few significant issues. However, where control was poor, blackgrass and Italian ryegrass is now appearing above crop canopies. Where patches are thick, targeted glyphosate is being applied to prevent seed spread. Some late wild oat treatment is reported to have been applied in the South West.

### Pest pressure

There are mixed reports of BYDV. Some are reporting very low levels of infection, with others noticing an increased prevalence across fields. The presence of aphids has been reported but remains at a level below the threshold for insecticide treatment. Sightings of rose grain aphids have been reported in Wales, but again at below threshold treatment levels.

### Disease pressure

T2 applications are complete for most farmers, with T2 fungicide applications made once the flag leaf (GS39) was fully emerged. Key targets were yellow rust in susceptible varieties and Septoria, where rainfall had increased disease pressure.

Farmers are preparing for T3 (ear wash) fungicide applications to protect against fusarium, where the risk is high.

### Prospects for the coming months

Now that rain has fallen, yield prospects look good.

## WINTER BARLEY

### Crop establishment

Growth stages range between GS59 (ears emerged) and GS69 (end of flowering).

### Nutrition

All fertiliser applications are now complete. Some farmers who initially planned to reduce nitrogen doses changed their minds following strong grain prices.

### Weed pressure

Overall, the level of broadleaved weed control has been good, with few significant issues. However, where control was poor, blackgrass and Italian ryegrass is now appearing above crop canopies. Where patches are thick, targeted glyphosate is being applied to prevent seed spread.

### Pest pressure

Fairly low pest pressure has been reported. However, rose grain aphids are increasing, but remain below the insecticide treatment threshold of 50% tillers infested.

### Disease pressure

The prolonged dry period has resulted in low disease pressure to date across the barley crop. However, recent rainfall has allowed late infections of rhynchosporium and net blotch to appear. This is especially true in more susceptible varieties or where fungicide rates were reduced.

All planned T1 and T2 fungicides have been applied on time, with the majority of crops receiving both treatments.

### Prospects for the coming months

Good prospects following the much-needed rain.

## WINTER OATS

### Crop establishment

The majority of crops are ranging between growth stages GS39 and GS60.

### Nutrition

Fertiliser applications are now complete.

### Weed pressure

Blackgrass, brome, wild oats, and cleavers have all been present in crops. However, thickening of the crop canopy has increased its competitiveness against weed pressure.

### Pest pressure

Rose grain aphids have been reported but remain under the treatment threshold.

### Disease pressure

Mildew is grumbling away where mildewcides were not used. However, the dry spell earlier in the spring has lowered disease pressure overall. Small amounts of crown rust have been observed in the South East.

### Prospects for the coming months

Providing the sunshine and rain continue, crops look well, and yield potential is promising.

## WINTER OILSEED RAPE

### Crop establishment

The majority of WOSR crops are at GS5.9 (100% potential pod set), with a small proportion of more backwards crops between GS4.5 (50% flowering) and GS5.5 (50% potential pod set).

### Nutrition

All nutrition is now complete. A few farmers have applied foliar nitrogen in an attempt to maximise yields, in response to the strong OSR prices.

### Weed pressure

Cleavers, thistles, and wild oats are present, but a thick crop canopy is providing effective competition against weeds.

### Pest pressure

Increasing numbers of mealy cabbage aphid and peach potato aphid have been captured at Rothamsted, but not yet at numbers which are a threat to crops. In the more backwards crops, towards the end of petal fall, cabbage seed weevil thresholds were starting to be met, with occasional crops requiring insecticide treatment.

Cabbage Stem Flea Beetle (CSFB) and pigeons are continuing to put pressure on crops that are already damaged. However, this only represents a small area, with only 6% of the national WOSR crop classified as either in poor or very poor condition.

### Disease pressure

Light leaf spot and sclerotinia are the main disease pressures. Sclerotinia infection has been slightly increased by rain splash during the recent wet weather. Higher sclerotinia pressure has been reported in the West, due to higher rainfall. The AHDB publish sclerotinia infection risk alerts here: <https://ahdb.org.uk/sclerotinia-infection-risk-alerts-for-oilseed-rape>

Sclerotinia sprays that are applied at flowering offer an opportunity to apply non-azole-based products, to aid in fungicide resistance management.

### Prospects for the coming months

Prospects are currently looking good.

## SPRING WHEAT

### Crop establishment

Crops are now growing quickly across all regions, thanks to recent rainfall. Most crops are between GS33 and GS37.

### Nutrition

All nitrogen has been applied, with the recent rainfall facilitating uptake. Some farmers who had originally reduced their nitrogen rates have been tempted to give a top up dose by high forward wheat prices.

### Weed pressure

Most crops received a pre-emergence herbicide. However, blackgrass incidences have been reported, which may affect crop prospects.

### Pest pressure

Gout fly eggs are reported in some Eastern regions, with the odd crop at the infestation threshold for insecticide treatment (50% of tillers infected).

### Disease pressure

The dry conditions earlier in the spring has kept disease pressure low. However, some yellow rust is beginning to be spotted.

### Prospects for the coming months

Prospects are mixed. Some later drilled crops have suffered with poor establishment due to the extended dry period.

## SPRING BARLEY

### Crop establishment

Crops are typically between GS30, and the most forward at GS45. The most forward crops will receive a PGR to reduce the brackling risk.

### Nutrition

Fertiliser applications are complete, with high grain prices incentivising farmers to apply nitrogen at normal rates.

### Weed pressure

Most crops received a pre-emergence treatment, and these have largely worked well.

### Pest pressure

There are reports of gout fly eggs, but not yet at a level requiring insecticide control.

### Disease pressure

In regions where it has rained recently, crops have accelerated through the growth stages. The most forward crops are now approaching the timing for T1 fungicides.

### Prospects for the coming months

Prospects remain weather dependant. Those crops on lighter soils have suffered from the moisture deficit earlier in the spring. In Yorkshire, early drilled crops have the best prospects.

## SPRING OATS

### Crop establishment

Crops are typically ranging between GS30 and GS37.

### Nutrition

Fertiliser applications are now complete.

### Weed pressure

Pre-emergence herbicides have been effective, but blackgrass is now starting to appear for some.

### Pest pressure

Low pest pressure reported to date.

### Disease pressure

Overall, crops look clean.

### Prospects for the coming months

Prospects currently looking good. Spring oats have fared better in the dry conditions than other cereal crops.

## SPRING OILSEED RAPE

### Crop establishment

The SOSR crop was still being drilled into May. The most forward crop is at GS3.7 (yellow), although the majority are ranging between GS1.6 and GS3.7. The rain in May was needed to enable crops planted into dry seedbeds to establish and emerge. In Yorkshire, there are reports of small areas of SOSR crop failure.

### Nutrition

All seedbed nutrition has been applied.

### Weed pressure

Many farmers started with a stale seedbed, applying glyphosate before drilling.

### Pest pressure

CSFB and pigeons have been causing damage to crops; the level of damage will determine future yield impact. Pollen beetle has been reported in the East Midlands, although not at levels requiring insecticide treatment.

### Disease pressure

Low disease pressure is reported to date.

### Prospects for the coming months

Mixed prospects at this stage.