

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Following a month of heavy rainfall in March, the weather in April improved slightly, though remained unsettled with regular rain showers and strong winds. As a result, all regions have reported delays to spring drilling, as well as delays to fertiliser and crop protection applications. Overall, weed and disease pressure is low, however it's reported that late fungicide and herbicide applications could be damaging moving forward.

Generally, winter crops are faring well, despite the wet weather, though establishment on heavier soils has been affected. Recent rainfall is also likely to result in increased pressure from Septoria and other cereal diseases, an issue that is worsened by late fungicide application. Cabbage stem flea beetle remains the biggest issue in winter oilseed rape crops. Where necessary, some OSR crops have been replaced with spring beans, spring oats or spring barley.

Spring plantings have reportedly been delayed by around a month on average. While some growers took advantage of the dry February, the unsettled weather in March and April has set some farmers back. As a result of the lower yield prospects in late-sown crops, it's been reported that inputs are being reduced in these crops.

To summarise, for most crops, yield prospects for harvest 2023 will depend greatly on an improvement to weather and soil conditions. Though for now, prospects are looking positive, despite the adverse weather.

## 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	0%	1%	10%	65%	23%	0%
Winter Barley	0%	0%	9%	67%	23%	0%
Winter Oats	0%	1%	17%	67%	14%	0%
Winter OSR	4%	7%	22%	48%	18%	0%
Spring Wheat	0%	1%	12%	48%	0%	39%
Spring Barley	0%	1%	7%	24%	1%	67%
Spring Oats	0%	2%	6%	18%	1%	73%

Source: RSK ADAS

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

## WHEAT

### Crop establishment

As at the week ending Tuesday 25 April, 88% of the GB winter wheat crop was in good/excellent condition, ahead of 84% at the same point last season. Just 1% of the crop was reportedly in poor/very poor condition, unchanged on the month, and down from 3% at this point last year.

Generally winter wheat crops are establishing well. However, some crop areas in the North West in particular have been impacted by localised flooding. The majority of crops are now in between the 31 and 33 growth stage (first node detectable and second node detectable), ahead of where they were at this time last year.

### Nutrition

Most growers are up to date with nitrogen applications, though some have been delayed by wet conditions. The final nitrogen application is expected at the end of April to beginning of May.

Despite relatively high fertiliser costs this season, most farmers are expected to maintain normal nitrogen application rates. In instances where reductions have been made, they have typically been around 5-20%, and only on feed wheat rather than milling.

### Weed pressure

Generally, the winter wheat crop across GB has seen very little weed pressure so far. However, in the West Midlands, levels of groundsel and burr chervil continue to increase and is something to monitor. Brome, ryegrass and blackgrass are also now present in some areas, though not in high levels.

Again, due to the wet weather, some contact acting herbicide treatments were delayed, so control of weeds is likely to be lower than if treatments had been applied earlier.

### Pest pressure

In general, no major pest problems have been reported, with very little incidence of BYVD seen. Frit fly damage has been seen quite widely across Scotland, affecting the youngest tillers. Aphids, frit fly, wheat bulb fly, and gout fly have also been reported across the rest of GB, but all at relatively low levels.

### Disease pressure

T1 fungicide sprays are now due. High levels of Septoria have been observed in most winter wheat crops now, particularly in susceptible varieties. Yorkshire has seen especially high

levels, and growers in the region are increasing their T1 fungicide application rate as a result.

Very low levels of yellow rust have been observed so far, even on varieties that are prone to higher levels of the disease.

### Prospects for the coming months

Overall, winter wheat crops are looking well at this point in the season, and yield prospects are good. The management of Septoria will remain an important watchpoint as we move through the rest of the season.

## WINTER BARLEY

### Crop establishment

Overall, GB winter barley is in relatively good condition. As at the week ending Tuesday 25 April, 90% of winter barley was in good/excellent condition, up from 84% at the same point last year. 0% of the crop was in poor/very poor condition, compared to 3% at this time last season.

The last few weeks have seen good crop growth, with the majority of crops now between the growth stages 32 and 33 (second and third node detectable). In some advanced crops, the flag leaf is becoming visible (GS37). It's worth noting that in Yorkshire, it has been reported that lodging control could become an issue, due to some PGR applications being delayed or missed, something to watch out for.

### Nutrition

Much like winter wheat, most growers are up to date with applications, though there are a few that have struggled due to wet conditions.

### Weed pressure

As with winter wheat, there has been very little weed pressure so far this season in winter barley crops, with broadleaved weeds generally well controlled or slow to emerge.

### Pest pressure

There have been no major pest issues reported so far. However, there are reports of some localised BYDV cases in the East of England.

### Disease pressure

Higher levels of disease have been observed where T0 and T1 spray applications have been delayed or missed. As could be expected, timely applications have resulted in cleaner crops. Hybrid varieties, in the North East in particular, are reportedly very clean. Occurrences of net blotch, brown rust and rhynchosporium have also been observed in some areas.

### Prospects for the coming months

Most winter barley crops for harvest 2023 look well and appear to have good yield potential. However, upcoming PGR application timings will be an important factor over the next few weeks.

## WINTER OATS

### Crop establishment

As at Tuesday 25 April, 81% of GB's winter oat crop was in good/excellent condition, down slightly from 85% at this point last year. Though, 1% of the crop was in poor/very poor condition, down from 3% this time last season.

Winter oat crops are generally developing well, with the majority of crops now between growth stages 31-33 (first and second node detectable).

### Nutrition

Again, much like wheat, most nitrogen applications are up to date, with final applications due imminently.

### Weed pressure

Weed pressure is generally low. However, grassweeds that are present in winter wheat are also present in winter oat crops. Broadleaved weeds have been slow to emerge.

### Pest pressure

No major pest issues have been reported so far this season.

### Disease pressure

Very little disease pressure has been observed so far, with mildew levels remaining low.

### Prospects for the coming months

Generally, most winter oat crops across GB are well tillered and appear to have good yield potential.

## WINTER OILSEED RAPE (OSR)

### Crop establishment

Crop conditions are very varied at this point in the season. Some areas are experiencing high levels of cabbage stem flea beetle (CSFB) issues or pigeon damage and are reporting stunted growth as a result. As at Tuesday 25 April, 66% of winter oilseed rape was in good/excellent condition, compared to 70% at the same point last season. 11% of the crop was in poor/very poor condition, compared to 7% last season.

In terms of development, the majority of winter OSR crops are now in the yellow bud (GS59) and flowering (GS6) stage.

### Nutrition

All nitrogen applications have now been made to winter oilseed rape crops.

### Weed pressure

Weed control so far this season has generally been good, however some herbicide applications have been delayed due to adverse weather, something to watch out for moving forward.

### Pest pressure

Cabbage stem flea beetle remains the biggest problem for OSR. In the West Midlands in particular, infestations have been variable with some crops unaffected while others have experienced severe infestations. Up to 15 larvae in the main stem has been observed in some crops.

There have also been reports of winter rape stem weevils and pollen beetles in some rapeseed crops, although not at a high enough level to be an issue. Pigeon damage has also been reported in several regions.

### Disease pressure

There are no major incidences of disease reported so far. Light leaf spot prevalence has been reported as higher than normal in some regions. Fungicide applications for sclerotinia are expected to be made within the next fortnight.

In Wales specifically, petal stick has been noted in more mature crops, increasing the risk of sclerotinia damage.

### Prospects for the coming months

Outlooks for the rest of the season range from good to below average depending on pest damage. However, it is expected that some currently poor crops will recover.

## SPRING WHEAT

### Crop establishment

As at Tuesday 25 April, spring wheat drilling was mostly complete, with 39% sown in February, 11% in March and 22% in April. Crop emergence has varied, depending on when the crop was sown and if the field has since experienced waterlogging.

Around 48% of the spring wheat crop was reported to be in good/excellent condition. This is down from 65% last year. 1% was in poor/very poor condition, compared to 8% last season. However, 39% of the crop is yet to be planted or has not yet emerged, compared to 10% at the end of April last season.

### Nutrition

Early sown crops typically received nitrogen soon after planting, while nitrogen was applied in the seedbed for later sown crops. In Yorkshire, reports suggest many growers have opted for another P&K holiday.

### Weed pressure

Pre-emergence herbicides have been applied in most regions, though there are some instances where these have been missed due to later-sown crops. There are no reports of weed issues so far.

### Pest pressure

There are currently no reports of any major pest issues. However, in the West Midlands and South West there has been some slug damage observed.

### Disease pressure

No instances of disease have been reported so far.

### Prospects for the coming months

Currently, earlier sown crops seem to be faring well, but there is some concern over later sown crops. Generally, yields will be dependent on soil conditions moving forward.

## SPRING BARLEY

### Crop establishment

Drilling of spring barley is well underway, with 19% sown in February, 7% in March, and 38% in April. Unsurprisingly, drilling has been delayed in some areas due to wet conditions.

Of what's been planted, 39% is now emerging or tillering.

### Nutrition

The majority of nitrogen applications have been completed.

### Weed pressure

Little to no weed pressure has been reported at this point. Pre-emergence herbicides have been missed in certain areas, but there are plans for post-emergence herbicide applications. In Yorkshire, broad leaved weeds and wild oats are now emerging.

### Pest pressure

No major pest issues have been reported as of yet.

### Disease pressure

No incidences of disease have been reported so far.

### Prospects for the coming months

Prospects for the spring barley crop range from good to below average, with some concerns for later sown crops.

## SPRING OATS

### Crop establishment

Drilling of spring oats is still in progress with 13% sown in February, 8% in March and 39% in April. So far, of what's been planted, 36% is either emerging or in the tillering phase.

### Nutrition

Nitrogen applications are being made either to the seedbed or at pre-emergence.

### Weed pressure

There are no reports of weed issues so far. Though some crops have not received a pre-emergence herbicide.

### Pest pressure

There have been no reports of any major pest issues at this point.

### Disease pressure

No major disease issues have been reported.

### Prospects for the coming months

As with spring barley, yields will be largely determined by soil conditions moving forward.

## SPRING OILSEED RAPE

### Crop establishment

Due to there being so few reports on spring OSR crops, information on the crop is based on very limited data, with 97% of crops either not yet planted or emerged. However, where sown, the crops at best are at the cotyledon stage.

### Nutrition

Nitrogen is being applied in the seedbed.

### Weed pressure

Pre-emergence herbicides have been applied where needed.

### Pest pressure

There are currently no major reports of pest pressures.

### Disease pressure

No major disease issues reported yet.

### Prospects for the coming months

Due to such a small proportion being planted at this point, it is too early to comment on yield prospects.